A PASSAGE TO THE NORTH

THE WEST AS SEEN THROUGH THE WORKS OF SOME AFRICAN NOVELISTS WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE THEME OF THE OUTSIDER

by
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To my family,

They who have suffered the special bereavement of the been-to's going away.

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ABSTRACT

The theme of this research is the passage to the North, or the 'West', as seen through the works of some African novelists. In this study the focus will be on the particular aspect of the African/Western contact - the common experience of a journey by an individual African from one society and culture to another, its impact on the individual, and the writer's sense of that individual as an outsider thereafter to both milieux.

The primary sources are a selection of fourteen novels. They are selected according to language and geographical criteria. The idea is to compare the African francophone novel to its anglophone counterpart, and also to prove that the literary production of Africa can be studied as a coherent unit.

One of the means that have been used for this purpose is the geography of particular themes such as the outsider, madmen, the creative hero, the outcast, and the misfit.

Another means is the particular critical standpoint the author of this thesis has chosen. Being an Algerian, he has endeavoured to provide an African view of a literary field that has been dominated by European criticism for a long period, while avoiding the taxonomic approach which aimed at classifying novels according to genre, language, or geographical origin.

One direct aim is to abandon the distinction often made between francophone and anglophone writing in Africa, and to treat African novelists as belonging to a coherent literary whole.

Thus it was important to include representatives from both North Africa (the Maghrib), and Africa south of the Sahara (i.e. black Africa). Within black Africa, it was necessary to consider writings from East, West, as well as South Africa, and also to analyse francophone black African novels as well as anglophone.

The chosen novels are discussed on the basis of a structural and thematic analysis. To begin with, the study has defined the passage to the North as the physical journey takes the traveller to the North. The African travellers referred to in the course of this study are fictional, even though several of the novels display a certain autobiographical element. In some of the narratives, however, there is another dimension of the journey; it takes place within Africa, or within the same country.

The voyage is defined first in connection with the meaning of West and North as they are used in the African novel. These concepts convey geographical, cultural, as well as technological meanings in the mind of the African. North or West are not only far-away places, places of exile, and

foreign lands, but they also represent another culture, another civilisation that has reached a major form of technological advancement.

It is within this framework that the idea of the voyage has to be situated. Going overseas, for the young African, means going from a world of common day to a world of wonder. This attitude is reinforced by the idea of a mission or contract. He goes overseas, generally for studies, and his duty is to bring back knowledge, money... and to share them with his family, or his group at large. The African going overseas, the 'been-to,' is seen as the bearer of the 'Golden Fleece.' While the voyage is something that is strongly desired in the first place, giving birth to such types as the exceptional hero, it gradually becomes feared as the results are not always positive. The exceptional hero is gradually being replaced by an atypical figure, the unsuccessful been-to who becomes an outsider in his own society.

This antagonistic relationship that takes place between the been-to and his group is reproduced in the artificial and conflicting structures of the novels. It is no longer the chronologically arranged narratives that referred to the existence of a well-ordered society. Instead, the basic values that held these societies together are upset, and this is reflected in the novels in the recurrence of conflicting structures. Chronology is no longer respected. And, as the psychology of the hero becomes more complex, so does the structure of the novel.

This antagonism also gives birth to the theme of the janus-like hero. Veering between conformity and unconformity, between success and failure, the focal figure is split into two halves. He identifies, in turn, with a positive double that bears exactly the same characteristics as his, and with a negative double. This psychological split is again taken further with the reference to the concept of madness. The unconforming heroes who refuse to adhere to the newly-erected values of their societies are quickly ostracized and promptly declared mad. In the mind of the novelists however, this concept of madness takes on a particular meaning.

While portraying focal figures that are thought to be madmen, the writers actually refer to the madness of the world that is to give birth to such plagues. The madmen become the only ones who are able to see clear and deep in a world that is blind. They represent the seers and the prophets who feel they have the duty to guide the others.

A necessary passage for these figures is the crossing of a desert, a spiritual desert that is perceived as a painful passage one has to undergo in order to attain a clarity of vision that will enable him to return a new man, a man able to create new things. It is within this framework of solitude, retirement, and duties that the role of the artist and writer in

Africa has to be replaced.

This study is divided into four main parts. Part one, grouping chapters one and two, provides introductory notions and concepts that are necessary for a better understanding of the theme of this research. Part two is more expository. It is a short presentation of the novels under scrutiny, and these novels are classified in a specific order so as to show the evolution from early African narratives to more recent ones. Part three examines the same novels through a thematic perspective, a perspective that follows the three stages of departure, initiation, and return. In part four are brought again the main points of this study. It is a recapitulatory part which discusses the outstanding issues that have emerged from this research.

The theme of the passage to the North is first defined in chapter one. Listing the primary texts chosen for study, it gives a definition of the key-concepts that are implicit in this study. Such concepts and notions are Africa, the journey, North and West, the Golden Fleece, and the outsider. Some considerations are also devoted to the interest and relevance of the theme as well as problems of language and sources. A section on methodology shows the possible tools in literary criticism that could be applied and explains the originality of the approach adopted here. Chapter two refers to the background reading that has supported this study. The selected primary texts are first replaced in their historical location so as to put the narratives in their respective contexts. Chapter two then proceeds with a review of literature, concentrating on the relevant African fiction or secondary texts to which reference has been made. In addition to these secondary sources, a review of the various trends in the criticism of African literature, both by Africans and non Africans helps to situate the critical approach suggested by this study.

In part two, chapters three, four, and five present the chosen novels. In addition to succinct biographical data on the novelist studied, they attempt to classify the novels into three logical categories respectively labelled 'Innocents Abroad,' 'The Middle Passage,' and 'The Urban Outcasts.' The idea is to show the three stages through which the heroes pass. With 'Innocents Abroad' (chapter three) they are shown to be communal, tribal men who are faithful to the mission that has been assigned to them. The Middle Passage of chapter four focuses on focal figures who are questioning the whole cycle. Some of them are subject to a serious form of doubt whereas others prove to be unsuccessful and unconforming. The last stage is illustrated in chapter five where the urban outcasts have no tribal link left in them and are shown to be

outcasts within Africa, thus restricting the scope of the journey to one continent, one country, or even one city.

These three stages are again taken up in part three and are examined in the framework of the cycle of departure, initiation, and return. Chapter six examines the ritual cycle and expands on the various implications of the phase of departure and separation. It refers to the existence of a well ordered society in which the rituals are observed and in which the traditional values are still respected. Tracing the emergence of an exceptional figure, of a contract, of a mission assigned to the departing ones, it shows how these heroes have views that are identical to those of the group at large. Through an analysis of the various elements of the ritual of the departure ceremony, it also indicates how the voyage is often both desired and feared, thus pointing to the possibility of an unsuccessful return.

The idea of failure is the dominant tone of chapter seven labelled 'This No Be Them Country.' It concentrates on two types of outsiders. Those who feel marginal in someone else's country, and the ones for whom it is a more serious matter as they are marginal in their own countries.

After an examination of three types of internal outsiders (the passive ones, the ones who resist, and the defeated ones), the focus is on how these marginal characters view the world they live in.

Chapter eight, referred to as depicting a world in fragments, concentrates on the return period. During this phase, the returned ones who have felt they were marginal in their own countries, scrutinize the central values of their societies and realise that they are bound to become the liminal ones, the outcasts, for they are the only ones who are able to see that the society is committed to a serious error. This awareness of a deep incompatibility is rendered in the novel with the use of a specific technique such as that of desert imagery and conflictual structures. Often the liminal figures are led to undertake their own crossing of the desert, therefore appearing under the traits of madmen, prophets, and seers.

Part four, which is the concluding part, recapitulates the basic assumptions of this study. In chapter nine it rediscusses the outstanding issues that have emerged from this research: writers, artists, and outsiders, West and North, and the recurrence of mixed couples in the chosen novels. Some considerations are devoted to recommendations for further research and a final point attempts to prognosticate future directions in the African novel.

TRANSLATIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

The originals of some novels that have been studied here were written in French. The translations provided are mine unless otherwise indicated.

The English translation, following the original in French, is referred to by the name of the translator and page number.

For the special case of Tayeb Salih's Mawsim al Hijra ila shamal and Yahya Haqqi Qindil umm Hashim, they are successively referred to under the title of the English version as Season of Migration to the North and The Saint's Lamp. Although the names of the novelists follow the quotations, it is understood that they refer to the respective translators.

In the text, the following abbreviations have been used:

Title of the novel	**Abbreviation**
Un Nègre à Paris	Un Nègre
L'Aventure Ambiguë	L'Aventure
Africa Answers Back	Africa
No Longer At Ease	No Longer
Things Fall Apart	Things
Arrow of God	Arrow
A Wreath for Udomo	Udomo
The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born	The Beautyful Ones
Why Are We So Blest?	Why?
Season of Migration to the North	Season
Topographie Idéale pour une Agression Caractérisée	Topographie
Going Down River Road	River Road
Kocoumbo l'étudiant noir	Kocoumbo
Mirages de Paris	Mirages

For the rest of the novels, there is no change as the titles are short enough: La Répudiation, L'Insolation, Le Démantèlement, The African, Les Boucs, Fragments, The Wanderers, and Kill Me Quick.

If

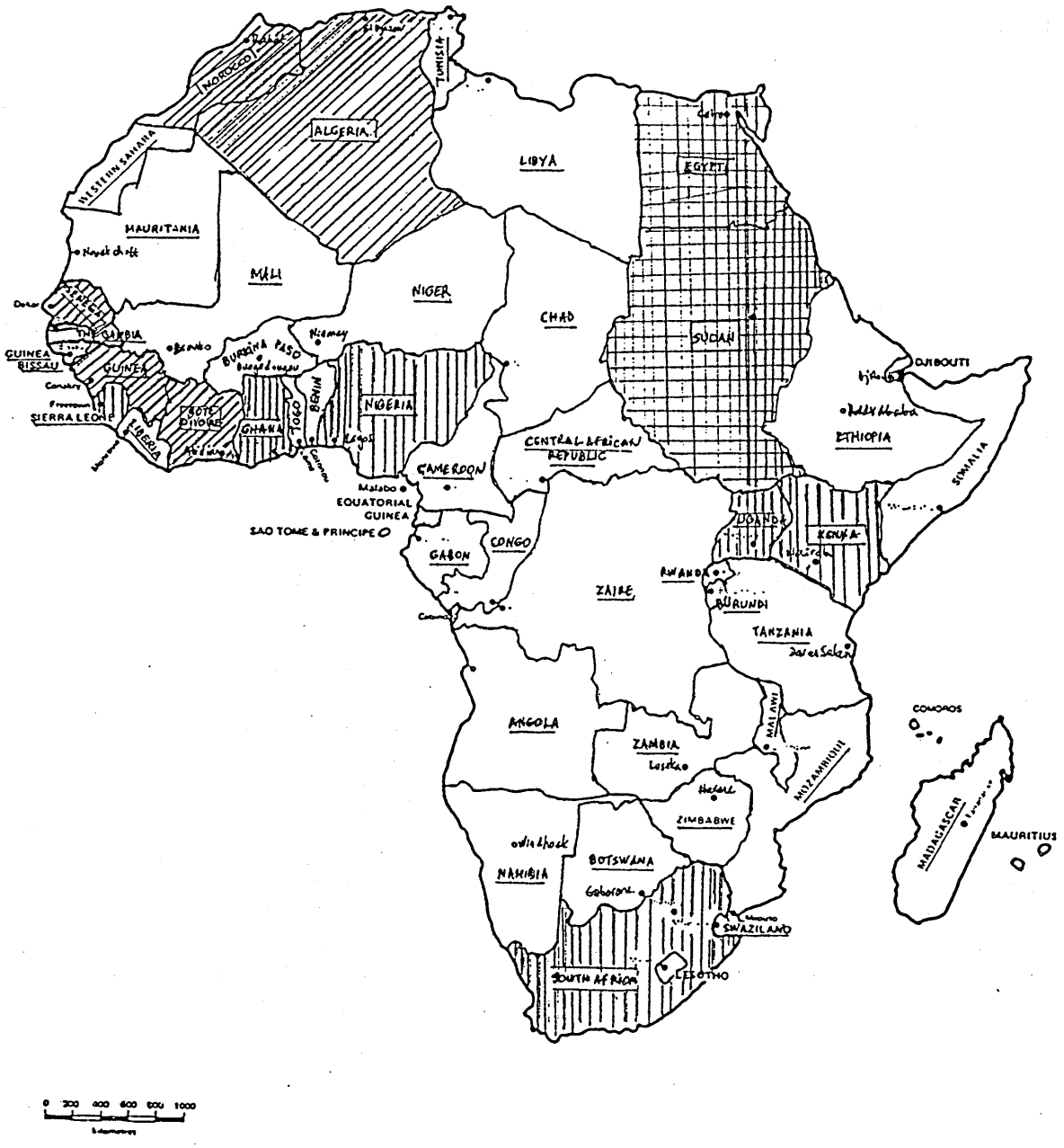
If he could have his way the artist might
change the hues of the sky and make it blue
at night

If she could have her way the songstress might
change the tune of the sad song and make fears
obsolete

But life, we forget, is the colour of pain
and pain and fears and sorrow the colour of life

Gikora Mwangi (Kenya) in Zimunya Musaemura, Porter Peter, and Kofi Anyidoho eds, The Fate of Vultures, New Poetry from Africa. BBC Prize-winning Poetry, Heinemann African Poets, London, 1990.

Africa



Origin of the novelists and their language of expression:

French
English
Arabic

Source: Africa Review, 1989

PART ONE: THEME, CONCEPTS, AND OBJECTIVES.

CHAPTER ONE: THEME AND CONCEPTS

1. Passage to the North: Theme and Texts.

The theme of this research is the passage to the North, or the "West", seen through the works of some African novelists. Associated with this theme is an exploration of the concept of the Outsider. Among the various lines African literature has followed, the contact with Europe and North America has constituted a predominant interest. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it has preoccupied many African novelists and a number of literary critics, both Western and African, have studied that preoccupation.

In this study, the focus will be on one particular aspect of the African/Western contact - the common experience of a journey by an individual African from one society and culture to another, its impact on the individual and the writer's sense of that individual as an outsider thereafter in both milieux.

The primary sources are a selection of fourteen novels - the reasons for the selection to be given later - which are the following ones (listed in order of publication):

Novelist	**Title of novel**	**Country**
Akiki NYABONGO	Africa Answers Back (1936)	Uganda
Bernard DADIE	Un Nègre à Paris (1953)	Ivory Coast
Driss CHRAIBI	Les Boucs (1955)	Morocco
Peter ABRAHAMS	A Wreath for Udomo (1956)	South Africa
Chinua ACHEBE	No Longer At Ease (1960)	Nigeria
Cheikh Hamidou KANE	L'Aventure Ambiguë (1961)	Senegal
Ayi Kwei ARMAH	The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born (1968)	Ghana
Tayeb SALIH	Season of Migration to the North (1969)	Sudan
Ezekiel MPHAHLELE	The Wanderers (1971)	South Africa
Ayi Kwei ARMAH	Why Are We So Blest? (1972)	Ghana
Meja MWANGI	Kill Me Quick (1973)	Kenya
Ayi Kwei ARMAH	Fragments (1974)	Ghana
Rachid BOUDJEDRA	Topographie Idéale pour une Agression Caractérisée(1975)	Algeria
Meja MWANGI	Going Down River Road (1976)	Kenya

In most of these narratives the physical journey takes the traveller to the North and it is precisely the theme of the passage to the north that the study will be looking at through these novels. The African travellers who are referred to in the course of this study are fictional, even though several of the novels display a certain autobiographical element. In some of the narratives, however, there is another dimension of the journey; it takes place within Africa, as in The Wanderers, or within the same country as in Going Down River Road or Kill Me Quick. This other connotation of the journey helps to show that the experience of the West does not have the exclusive privilege of breeding outsiders; one can become a complete outsider even without leaving one's country. The influence of Europe is nevertheless important, and the conscious outsider has perhaps become so because - like Ismail in the Egyptian Yahya Haqqi's The Saint's Lamp (not selected for special study here) - he has absorbed the more individualistic outlook of European cultures and also the whole intellectual baggage of "the West" with its critical, sceptical viewpoint. However, one can wonder how far the outsiders represented in the chosen novels constitute projections of the writers' position in most societies because of their extra self-awareness, and because they are seers and prophets by vocation.

2. Initial Concepts.

In the course of this study, a certain number of concepts will be used. Reference will be often made to the idea of the journey - be it an outward journey or an internal migration, to concepts such as West and North, to the character of the been-to, and also to the central notion of the outsider. In the interest of clarity, these notions and concepts and the researcher's definition of them are spelled out here, at the outset.

a. Africa and African

Throughout this work, the adjective African is used in a specific way. The generally accepted meaning of the word is in exclusive reference to Africa South of the Sahara, to Black Africa. A cursory look at Hans Zell's A New Reader's Guide to African Literature for example, and its list of specialised magazines and periodicals, reveals that, out of a total of 117, only three titles (i.e. Présence Africaine, Afrique Contemporaine, and A Current Bibliography of African Affairs) include the Maghreb when referring to Africa. In this study, one wish is to extend the meaning of the adjective African so that it encompasses also that part of Africa that is situated

North of the Sahara, and also - when seen from a Maghrebine perspective - some of the nearer areas of the Middle East like Sudan. In so doing we rely on the existence of common themes among the novels dealt with. Themes such as the voyage and the attitudes to it, the perception of the stay overseas and the expectations that are attached to it, as well as the emergence of marginal forms of characters like the madmen, constitute for us the common ground that joins Black Africa to Africa North of the Sahara.

b. Outward Journey and Internal Migration.

Whereas in some of the novels, the journey means going necessarily to the West, the journeys illustrated in some others do not take the protagonists to Europe. What is actually witnessed is the gradual shrinking of the scope of the journey . Instead of being the intercontinental journey of Un Nègre à Paris, of Fragments or of Season of Migration to the North for example, it takes place within the African continent (as in The Wanderers), within one specific country (Kenya in the case of Kill Me Quick), or even within one particular city (the action of Going Down River Road takes place in Nairobi). In The Wanderers, "overseas" is already within the African continent. Mphahlele talks of Iboyoru (Nigeria) and Lao Kiku (Kenya) as if they were as distant as the United States of America or Europe. His black South African hero was indeed expecting to feel at home in either country, but what he experiences during his stay in Iboyoru and Lao Kiku is more of the loneliness of a foreigner, even amidst fellow Africans of the same skin colour. The boundaries of the journey are further restricted in Kill Me Quick as the focal figures travel from the countryside to the city. In the process of this internal migration, Meja and Maina come to realise that it is not necessary to go overseas in order to feel abroad. Their alienation is perhaps more serious than if they were overseas; they, like the butts of Driss Chraibi's Les Boucs who live in Paris, feel that they are the pariahs of a society that rejects them. This distance between the newcomer and the urban universe takes another dimension in Going Down River Road as the central figure, Benjamin Wachira, is shown to make a similar journey. This time, it is not from the countryside to the city, but within the same city, a downfall from one social class to another.

c. North or West?

One of the ways of determining the meaning attached to such concepts as the West, or the North, is to examine the semantic content of the various titles of the novels and the stereotyped expressions used in the novels to refer to Europe in general. In his "Essai de titrologie romanesque," Bernard Mouralis (1980) points to the importance of the title of a novel in

determining the relationship that exists between the receivers of the novel, i.e. the audience, and the senders, i.e. both the author and the publisher. In some of the titles he considers, it appears that few of the African novelists consciously use stereotyped formulae in the title of their novels, but the use of stereotypes in the titles is the indicator of a deliberate strategy of the author and publisher (Mouralis, 1980, 56). Among the novels to be studied here, however, there is no uniformity of enunciation. The titles of L'Aventure Ambiguë, Fragments and The Wanderers do not refer to any geographical, cultural area of the world in particular. Instead they point to the existence of a problematic, fragmented state. Like Things Fall Apart by the Nigerian Chinua Achebe, they are meant to say that "the centre cannot hold" any longer. Apart from The Wanderers which has to be treated differently, the cause of this falling apart can be related to the ambiguous nature of the contact with the West. In both L'Aventure Ambiguë and Fragments, it is suggested that the focal figures are torn between two irreconcilable tendencies. Like Samba Diallo in L'Aventure Ambiguë who is unable to find a compromise between the advancing Western materialism and the decaying African spiritualism of his people, Baako in Fragments also recoils from the materialistic worship that has contaminated his countrymen, but he thinks that the values of the ones gone before might constitute a form of refuge and salvation. In the case of The Wanderers, it is first thought that the going abroad might help but the hero only manages to become a disillusioned wanderer.

For the other novels, only two of the fourteen titles chosen for this survey explicitly make reference to a geographical concept: Un Nègre à Paris and Season of Migration to the North. In the former the West is represented by synonyms or symbols; Paris constitutes a symbol of France by being its capital, whereas the North referred to in the latter is meant as a concept that expresses an opposition between a Southern, rural, and spiritual hemisphere on the one hand and a Northern part, more urban, more technologically advanced and more materialistic on the other. Such an opposition is again reproduced in the title of L'Aventure Ambiguë although the reader has to start reading the novel in order to understand the terms of the dichotomy. With Les Boucs the reference to the western world is more subtle. Chraibi consciously uses a code word - *les boucs* - that has to be understood from within his "lieu d'énonciation"; one has to be either a French person or a North African emigrant in order to fully understand the meaning of the word 'boucs'. The expression "les boucs," translated by Hugh A. Harter as "the butts," is a derogatory word used by the French to refer to Maghrebine and especially to Algerian emigrants in France. It belongs to

the same register as "bicot, malfrat, arabe, sidi, noraf" (Les Boucs, 19). The word "boucs" also conveys other connotations. It can be understood as implying that the Arabs are treated as scapegoats (boucs émissaires). It can also be related to the French idiomatic expression "ça sent le bouc", meaning there is a nasty smell. In the mind of Driss Chraibi however, it appears to refer back to the point in time where the hero, Yalann Waldik, had to sell his father's last "bouc" in order to pay for his travel expenses. The plural "les boucs" standing for the promised 10,000 boucs: "Il persuada son père de vendre son dernier bouc, lui expliquant qu'avec le prix de ce bouc il en pourrait acheter mille dans dix ans" (Les Boucs, 194). The same assumption is valid for the third novel of Ayi Kwei Armah in which the title (Why Are We So Blest) is a literate version of the American Dream as is later explained in the novel, and stands for a code-word that has the same function as the word "les boucs".

With the rest of the novels studied, there is definitely no reference to the world overseas in their titles. Geographically speaking, A Wreath For Udomo for example is an anonymous type of statement that does not say whether action will be taking place overseas or elsewhere, although it has funeral or victorious connotations. On the contrary, The African conveys in its title a deliberate focus on a mythical Africa in general and on an African country in particular, although this type of attitude such as the one displayed by Kisimi Kamara is the outcome of a certain experience in the West. The rest of the novels explicitly refer to a local reality that excludes the idea of the voyage overseas. It is the case with Going Down River Road and The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born. The former is more concerned with the urban proletariat that survives in the African metropolis of Nairobi. Post-independence disillusionment is the focus of the latter. In general, there is in these novels no specific use of stereotyped expressions that consciously refer to the West. When they are not to be found in the titles, one has to look for them in the text of the novel proper. In the novels studied, a search for stereotypes or ready-made expressions that refer to the countries overseas suggests that in the mind of the African exist three main categories: the geographical North; the technological North referred to as the West, and the more complex idea of the West. Combining the characteristics of the first two categories, this third representation of the West takes into account the impact of the experience of living overseas as concerns the formation of the hero, his evolution, and the degree of his reinsertion after his return, and further provides a more personalized reflection on the nature of the crossing from South to North or

from East to West.

Since the whole concept of the North is an important part of this research study, the approaches of the various novelists and the implications of the attitudes they attribute to their characters will be analysed later. Here, by way of introduction, it should be said that a whole range of individual responses to contact with the West will be examined in detail. From this examination it emerges that the contact is first defined in terms of a large and vague geographical notion, and then becomes in the minds of the various focal figures the expression of the superiority of Western know-how, before being gradually shifted to a more sophisticated perception of an imposed cultural and ideological hierarchy. This range of responses to the stay overseas and to the contact with the West conveniently reproduces and covers the different stages of the cycle of education/formation to which the African going overseas is submitted. While the early African travellers abroad were doing a pioneering job, their experience and reports on the world overseas helped the following generation of travellers to have a better view of the West. To these therefore, the West was not a totally new experience. In addition to the accounts of the returned travellers, they have already had a preliminary contact with another culture when they went to mission schools where they have had the opportunity to see some objective proofs of Western technological superiority. With the younger group of African writers, Western superiority is less taken for granted. It is even questioned when some of them realize that the type of education they have received overseas does not meet their expectations.

A definition of the concept of the West in African literature should also take into account two other areas of experience. To begin with, the West is seen as a place of exile which represents an outward voyage, as illustrated in works of Ezekiel Mphahlele and Peter Abrahams. To be complete, this definition should also refer to the more specific situation where the voyage does not take the hero geographically to the West, but happens within the country, for example from a rural area to a more urbanized one, or even within the city, from one social class to another as it can be read in the urban novels of Meja Mwangi.

The theme of the West must be understood as conveying two meanings. First the West stands for a departure-initiation period and for the experience overseas in its various aspects: the physical experience of expatriation, as well as the social, ideological and literary experience. The West will be seen here as a component of the modern African personality. Then the word West also bears another connotation. The Western period can be felt as

constituting a revelation period allowing the writer to better understand his own country's issues. Therefore the West is sometimes used as a literary theme whereby the writer situates the action of the novel outside for reasons of convenience while actually dealing with a specific country. The West is also used as a social theme for the expression of the writer's westernization, estrangement and alienation.

A direct consequence of the stay overseas, in the West in particular, is that it has given birth to stereotyped expressions such as "been-to" for the anglophone word, and "émigré" for its maghrebine equivalent, to refer to the Africans who have had a prolonged stay overseas.

d. Bearers of the Golden Fleece: the Been-to and the Emigré .

African travelers went abroad for a variety of reasons. Those studied in the novels were mostly students who have to go overseas in order to get higher education, the necessary continuance of a cycle that has begun with their attending the Western-type school. To these heroes, the going overseas is always a crossing that takes the form of a passage to the North. As in the Greek original myth of the quest for the Golden Fleece by Jason, this modern Golden Fleece retains its magic character for the departing one is believed to come back a charmed man. In Africa, and in West Africa in particular, the actual phrase 'bringing back the Golden Fleece' was used, but it later gave birth to the concept of the 'been-to'[1]. The been-to is a common word in this area of Africa, so much so that there was, in Ghana in the 1950's, a popular "highlife" tune about it. The song expresses the dream of a girl who wants to marry a 'been-to' with a 'Jaguar' and a 'fridge full'. The resonances of Cyprian Ekwensi's Jagua Naana are in this respect quite symptomatic as the word Jaguar is mentioned in the title. It is to be found again in Nkem Nwankwo's My Mercedes Is Bigger Than Yours in which it is a question of a red Jaguar the hero brings back to his village after a very long stay in the city.

This concept of the 'been-to' is, however, one that is typical of the West African area alone. In North Africa, and in Algeria in particular, the equivalent concept is that of the 'émigré'. It is used to qualify a person who has spent some time overseas or who is living there. As for the West African, the 'émigré' is fundamentally different from the Algerian who has never left his country. He is believed to possess qualities and attributes that are absent in the average Algerian: he is generally thought to be richer, because he lives in a country where it is believed that money is easy to make; he is also seen as being more liberal, more broad-minded and less conservative; finally, as in the West African highlife tune, he offers

better prospects, when he is a male, and represents an attractive partner for girls who are eager to marry such a person. (Incidentally, where the 'been-to' is a female, that is an 'émigrée', the picture changes completely as she is suddenly the symbol of sexual freedom, absence of morality, therefore constituting a bad party for prospective husbands).

e. The Outsider.

Another connotation of these two concepts - 'been-to' and 'émigré' - is that the persons thus represented are in the final instance aliens whenever they do not bear the conventional and generally accepted attributes of the been-to. They are outsiders to the milieu to which they return after a prolonged stay overseas. Their stay overseas, like attendance at the white/colonial[2] school, tends to produce several forms of outsiders.

The primary form of outsider is the returned one who is caught in a dilemma and has become an outsider against his will. He is the one who has become the object of a set of forces, the one who is no longer in control of his destiny, and who cannot readapt to his original society. In this case, the word outsider is synonymous with hybrid, alien, insecure, and naive.

No longer in tune with the prevailing social practice, he goes against the pre-established ideas of his milieu without being aware of doing so. For example, Chief Ati in Nyabongo's Africa Answers Back returns from the war, having forgotten his people's custom about the naming of children and wants to choose for himself a name for the newborn boy. While the others ascribe this peculiar behaviour to the effect of a prolonged stay outwith the original community, it is also implied that they belong to a society that does not accept individual assertions. And the outsider is the one who is no longer in harmony with the rest of his milieu.

Another form of outsider is the conscious outsider, who has deliberately chosen to be the Other, the external eye, looking at his community from without. One example of this detached outsider is Tanhoé Bertin of Un Nègre à Paris who looks at both Agni and French societies with the same critical eye. The external observer is sometimes no longer ready to accept things as they are and he is prepared to upset and jettison the whole set of established values. Baako in Fragments for example rejects the generally accepted veneration of cargo, while his double Modin, in Armah's Why Are We So Blest?, in turn completely destroys the concept of the White Man's Burden which the other African students abroad accept without question.

While they are basically antagonizing their societies, some of these been-to's who have now become outsiders take their marginality further. As they resent the generally admitted behaviour and want to go beyond the

surface reality of daily reflexes, they acquire another dimension. They become seers, prophets in their own eyes only. The others simply call them mad. For a few enlightened marginals like them, and who are able to communicate with them, they will represent the prophets, the ones who see deeper, further. The ones who are in search of an ultimate, higher form of harmony, which some find in a return to origins or original sources of inspiration.

What makes the outsider a person different from the rest of society is that at heart he is fundamentally alien. He is alien because he is not satisfied with the state of things as they are, because he does not share with his contemporaries the same preoccupations. He is more concerned with philosophical or essential, existential questions. The outsider is "the man who is interested to know how he should live instead of merely taking life as it comes."(Wilson, 1956, 67). He "cannot live in a comfortable and insulated world, accepting what he sees and touches as reality"(Wilson, 1956, 15); he sees deeper than the surface. He is like the one-eyed man in the country of the blind; "he is the one man who knows he is sick in a civilization that doesn't know it is sick."(Wilson, 1956, 20) His attempt to gain control over a chaotic reality - a world without values - often takes the form of a vision, a prophetic mission, of which insanity is one of the important symptoms. He very often is aware that he is different from other men because he has been destined to something greater; he sees himself in the role of predestined poet, predestined prophet, or world-improver. In African literature, the outsiders we have come across are not the romantic type of impractical dreamers. They are generally unhappy persons who are, like Krebs in Hemingway's 'Soldier's Home', searching for a course of action that gives expression to that part of themselves which is not contented with the trivial and unheroic, a course of action in which they are most themselves, in which they achieve the maximum self-expression.

3. The General Relevance and Interest of the Theme

It is not only because many novelists have written on the subject of the journey to the North that its relevance should be taken for granted. In fact, it is not without significance that each African novelist mentioned in this thesis has at one time or another dealt with the theme of exile or the experience of the West, even if he has devoted only a single novel to the subject. It is a relevant one because it is a contemporary phenomenon which affects huge numbers of intellectuals all over Africa. To begin with it is a response to a tendency that considered Africa as the object of European scrutiny. In the European view, exile and exoticism were African. Our novelists however show that exile and exoticism can be European. At another

level, these writings are also a response to a national reality. It is a social and political criticism of their own societies. It also constitutes a search for an identity which is all the more important as these writers belong to a particular generation, a generation of transition between the decaying traditional world and the still hesitating trends of modernity that are slowly invading or at least changing Africa.

One of the reasons that make this theme both important and relevant is that the theme of exile is an important one in both world literature and contemporary African fiction. In world literature, one of the earliest examples is Homer's Odyssey. Gone to fight the Trojans, Ulysses, the hero of the Odyssey, starts his long return after successfully taking Troy. The Odyssey is the story of his long return which lasts ten years. During this decade which he spends far from his native Ithaca, he lives many adventures that make him a changed man. What the reader should retain from this narrative is the perception of his voyage, or rather of the result of his voyage. As the French Joachim Du Bellay puts it in his Regrets

> Heureux qui, comme Ulysse, a fait un beau voyage
> Ou comme cestui-là qui conquit la toison,
> Et puis est retourné, plein d'usage et raison,
> Vivre entre ses parents le reste de son âge! (Regrets, XXXI)

Three central notions are emphasized in these lines by Joachim Du Bellay. To begin with it is the idea that the voyage is fantastic. The discovery of other countries always has an attractive aspect even if it is only for the sake of travelling itself. Here the hero not only discovers foreign lands but his going abroad is also understood as representing a double quest. A quest for fame and a quest for knowledge. This is what Du Bellay means by the words *toison*, *usage* and *raison*. It is this achievement that is meant to make of the voyage a successful event. Moreover, and it is the third notion, this achievement should not be only a personal and egotistic display of prowess. The results have to be shared with the ones who have remained at home, here the parents in the larger meaning of the word. The theme of the sacred journey and the figure of the quester are also recurrent characteristics in African novels. It is the sacred journey of the man who journeys out, achieves knowledge, and comes back, a pattern which is frequently found in African traditions and myths.

The other reason for the relevance of the theme resides in the fact that an analysis of this theme provides us with a global approach treating Africa as a whole literary unit. It stresses common attitudes from one country to another, from one writer to another. Although the detail and even the main aims of, for example, British and French colonial policies differed, nevertheless in general the African countries (and their novelists) shared

similar colonial situations and are facing similar problems in the post-independence period. The novelists also share the same obliged use of a foreign language and a similar experience of exile.

The movement of exile - expatriation from Africa to Europe - can be understood also as constituting an attempt to reverse a literary tendency: in the past, in the literature written in European languages, exile was African, whereas now, African novelists show that it can be European. Moreover, these novelists provide a view of Europe seen from without instead of and countervailing the view of Africa seen from without. For a long period, Africa has been the object of European analysis. It has often been considered as the "South" of a Northern hemisphere by such writers as Joseph Conrad in Heart of Darkness, Graham Greene in The Heart of the Matter, John Updike[3] in The Coup among others. As a consequence, literary investigations and scholarly research have followed the same lines. This research was mostly concerned with themes such as "the image of Africa in Western literatures" such as in Dupuy's L'Algérie dans les lettres françaises.

There are two ways to approach the relationship between Africa and the West. The first one is to deal with the image of the African continent in western literature[4]. In the field of fiction, an exhaustive list of all the European novels with Africa or an African country as their main subject would be outwith the limits of this work. For further study of this aspect, one should refer to S.L. MILBURY-STEEN (1980) who has compiled an important list of European novels with Africa as their subject-matter. In her list one notes for example Joyce CARY Mister Johnson (New York: Berkeley Publishing Corporation, 1964), Graham GREENE The Heart of the Matter (New York: Viking Press, 1971), a list to which the following can be added: Joseph CONRAD Heart of Darkness and Ernest HEMINGWAY The Snows of Kilimanjaro for example. Milbury-Steen also cites a certain number of French references such as Robert Louis DELAVIGNETTE Les Paysans Noirs: récit soudanais en douze mois (Paris: Librairie Stock, 1931); Pierre LOTI Le Roman d'un Spahi (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, n.d.); Robert RANDAU (pseudonym of Robert Arnaud) Le Chef des Porte-Plumes (Paris: Editions du Nouveau Monde, 1922). This list can be complemented with many other titles of novels that deal specifically with the Maghreb for example.The previous list represents a tendency in which Africa was seen from Europe.

An alternative to this North-South approach would concentrate on the African works or works of fiction that aim at reversing this tendency. In other words, on the image of the West in African literature. As far as research is concerned, so far only three attempts to study the image of the

West in African literature have been located to date. Robert PAGEARD has given a brief introduction to the subject in an article entitled 'L'image de l'Europe dans la littérature ouest-africaine d'expression française' in Connaissance de l'Etranger, Mélanges Offerts au Comparatiste J.M. Carré (Paris: Didier, 1964, 323-46). Another piece of research is that of François-Xavier GASANA, Le thème de l'Europe dans quelques romans africains d'expression française et anglaise (Université de Liège, Mémoire de Licence, 1969-70). Richard BONNEAU has also produced a doctoral thesis under the title L'Image de l'Occident dans le roman négro-africain. L'exemple ivoirien (3e cycle, Tours, 1975). Nothing similar in English has been traced, but North American sources have not been exhaustively explored for this study.

The modern period sees the African writers attempting to reverse a tendency in which exile was exclusively African. By writing about their stay in Europe, and giving a view of Europe as seen through African eyes, they show that exile can be European. It is asserted that this literature about Europe is not an entirely recent phenomenon; nevertheless, it is interesting to devote some attention to these early African writings. In this respect, seventeenth-century Juan Latino, eighteenth-century Jacobus Eliza Johannes Capitein, and Anton Wilhelm Amoo, along with Ignatius Sancho, Ottobah Cuguano and Olaudah Equiano, for example, were among the early Africans to provide an African view of the European scene.

Early examples are to be found in either the travel literature or the few exceptional cases of freed African slaves who managed to get some education and wrote about their personal experiences. One of the most outstanding examples of this type of literature is The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa the African better known as Equiano's Travels (Ed. Paul Edwards, London: Heinemann, 1967). Within the first forty years of its publication, the narrative went through seventeen editions and was translated into several European languages. In the narrative the author, Olaudah Equiano, tells how he was captured at the age of ten in what is now Nigeria and was sold as a slave in America and later in the West Indies. After he bought his freedom, when he was twenty-one, he went to England where he spent his time campaigning with the anti-slavery movement. His narrative also contains details about his life in England and also his impressions gathered in his travels to various European countries.

Despite its being published as early as 1789, Equiano's Travels is not however the first example of an African writing about his contact with Europe. In his article 'Confirming Intellectual Capacity: Black Scholars in Europe during the Renaissance and the Enlightenment' (1980), Robert Fikes Jr. mentions the names of three Africans who have achieved a certain fame in Europe: Juan Latino in Spain, Jacobus Eliza Johannes Capitein, and Anton

Wilhelm Amoo.

Janheinz Jahn also cites in A History of Neo-African Literature (1968) other examples of Africans who wrote about their stay in Europe. One of them is a narrative published in Berlin in 1892 by AMUR bin Nasur bin Amur Ilomeir. It concentrates on the childhood of the author in Zanzibar, his voyage to Berlin via Naples, Lisbon, Amsterdam, London and Hamburg, and his experience in Germany under the protection of his tutor, Dr Büttner who made him his language teacher. Another example also from Zanzibar, now part of the present Tanzania, is mentioned for another book in Swahili that appeared in London in 1932 under the title Tulivyoona na tulivyofanya Ingereza (London: The Sheldon Press, 1932) (what we have seen and what we have done in England) by Hugh Martin KAYAMBA. This book covers his voyage from Dar-es-Salaam to London where he had to represent his country. His second voyage to England is reported in a smaller book under the title An African in Europe (London: United Society for Christian Literature, 1948).

In the introductory section to his thesis, Le thème de l'Europe dans quelques romans africains d'expression française et anglaise, (Mémoire de Licence, Liège,1969-70) François-Xavier Gasana mentions two other examples. The first one is by Bata Kindai Amgoza Ibn LOBAGOLA, a Black African who claims Jewish origins, and who publishes in 1930 An African Savage's Own History (London: Knopf,1930). Lobagola's main aim was mainly a quest for the sensational and presents himself as the "good savage" who has been corrupted by "civilization". The second case mentioned by Gasana is the account of the voyage of an African chief, Yeta III, King of the Barotse (a tribe in present Zambia), who travels to London for the crowning of George VI and Queen Elizabeth in 1937. Written by his secretary, Godwin MBIKUSITA, in a book entitled Yeta's visit to England, 1937 (Lusaka,1940), the narration continuously praises the British and their country and carefully reports every detail of Yeta's stay in England.

With the modern generation of African writers, the descriptions are more and more personal and their voyages are no longer to Europe exclusively. The Nigerian J.P. Clark in America, their America (London: Deutsch, 1964; Heinemann, 1968), the Kenyan Mugo Gatheru in his Child of Two Worlds (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul,1964; Heinemann,1966), and Legson Kayira from Malawi with a book called I Will Try (Longmans,1965) all deal with their aspirations about the United States of America and their actual experiences there. Another Ghanaian, E. John Hevi has written an original account of his stay in the Republic of China under the title of An African Student in China (London,1964).

With the modern African writers describing Europe, the preoccupations seem to be different. Our novelists write in a period when the flag of "négritude" is somewhat outdated, the propagandist type of writing and the phase of self-affirmation in apprentice literature belong to the past. They are writing in a period of major importance when African societies are hesitating between two ambivalent cultural models and are sometimes falling into political or economic excesses.

By taking a stand and committing themselves by writing on contemporary issues, these writers produce works the significance of which goes beyond that of a temporary phenomenon. The target of their novels is society itself, its values and the changes they are undergoing. Among the causes of these mutations the experience represented by the contact with the West has a major role. This experience of the Western world and values has followed three phases. The first one which was one of novelty coincided with the discovery of the white man by the African, the missionary and later the colonial ruler. Later novelists took a stand by fighting the European presence in Africa as the independence movements became important. With the third phase in which the writers are generally much younger writers, the accent is no longer on colonial-related matters. They are more inclined to ponder on issues facing African states in the post-independence era. One of such fundamental issues is highlighted when they go overseas. Their contact with the West, being different from that of their elders, has given them a privileged insight into the New World. Because they were no longer in a position of psychological inferiority vis-à-vis the white culture in general, they were able to comprehend in a more detached manner the influence of this Western experience on their African societies.

The heroes they portray go overseas as representatives of their own people, endowed with a particular mission in which they are asked to bring back wisdom and wealth, and they carry with them a frozen image of Africa. They are mostly adolescents who, while they quickly evolve in one direction, keep thinking that their societies remain static and await their return to change. What they forget is that their societies for their part also change as quickly and often in an opposite direction. This gap, which can be related to a question of inadaptation, makes these focal figures live in a universe belonging to a mythically perfect past. While this can be seen as constituting a handicap which partly accounts for their being marginalised on their return, it also gives the returned been-to the opportunity to look at his milieu from a distance. It is precisely this objectivating distance which allows them to look at their societies with a fresh view. As a reading of modern African fiction reveals, it seems that the novel is written from

outside.

In an unpublished article -'Fiction Rebuked by Reality: the Future of the Novel' - Kole Omotoso[5] sees the African novels as either writing from one community or writing towards one community. One should say however that it is not entirely accurate to assume that this category of novelists necessarily belongs somewhere. The word "community" gives the novelists a point of anchorage which they do not necessarily have or feel. It is precisely this feeling of "bastardy" or "illegitimacy"[6] that pervades the more recent African novels. It seems that the more modern novelists write from a "lieu d'énonciation" that is situated outwith their societies and that they are addressing a society that either no longer exists or that exists only in their minds. This feeling is perhaps more acute in the case of the Francophone African novelists of the Maghreb who have the feeling that they are writing from a cultural limbo.

It is this range of contexts that gives birth to the position of the outsider. Outsider as far as the "lieu d'énonciation" is concerned, and also outsider when the stress is laid on the fact that the society and the returned one do not have the same expectations. This situation of divorce is far from being a fictional reality only. It is a malaise which affects the élite in general and the educated ones in particular as they are more sensitive to the importance of cultural and other vital issues. By illustrating this malaise, often in fictionalised biographies, our novelists signal the danger ahead. A danger that is facing populations who readily forget their own cultural assets and absorb the values of an alien and imported culture.

4. Problems of Language and Sources

The above-mentioned references to the theme of the journey are essentially of French and English expression, i.e. the two languages the author is familiar with. This also reflects the fact that research was conducted in Algeria and Great Britain, thus posing the question of language and access to other specific sources.

The theme of the journey to the North is indeed a rich one in the Arab novel, especially from the Middle East. It has prompted critical approaches to some of the novels such as Season of Migration to the North or The Saint's Lamp which were originally written in Arabic. However, because of the language barrier, access to both such primary sources and material has been determined by their availability in a French or English translation or version.

It is also my assumption that there exists, especially in North America,

an entire body of research in this field, and within the theme of the journey to the North in particular. I have been unable to consult them, but this awareness is nevertheless present in the few references that are made to a limited number of American scholars, and also to some American and Canadian-based critics, in addition to the relevant proceedings of the African Literature Association.

5. Methodology and Treatment.

a. Tools of Literary Criticism: the Possible Approaches.

The critical tools that have been applied to the reading of the African novel have followed three different directions so far: a Marxist approach, a receptionist approach, and a new African standpoint. Despite the variety of reading frameworks however it seems that none of these approaches is totally satisfactory, and one is tempted to say that a combination of all three would perhaps be more rewarding.

The Marxist analysis of the conditions of production, of the ideological relationship between rulers and ruled, ruling classes and writer, is indeed necessary to appreciate the birth and growth of African writing, but the method of analysis seems to me to be too deterministic. Such an approach would devote too big a role to the colonial situation and the historical factor.

The Marxist standpoint, however, is not completely irrelevant; but it should be complemented by a receptionist attitude to a work of art, especially in the context of modern African writing. Since there is a serious controversy about the different appreciations of African novels by different audiences (European, African), the reader's role should be examined with particular attention. On the one hand, the concept of the "implied reader" may be useful in determining which reader the African novelist addresses, and on the other hand, it would clarify the position of the writer himself.

This type of approach would perhaps concentrate too much on the ability of the reader to decipher formant techniques and expectations of the writer. As Iser writes, "to read at all, we need to be familiar with the literary techniques and conventions which a particular work of art deploys...".

A more general approach is suggested by Jean-Paul Sartre (1967) with the idea of "key-words" or code-words. People of the same period, he writes, the same community, who have had the same experiences, understand each other quickly. So there is no need to write much. They use code-words. These code-words or shared concepts are perhaps the common reference of the African

novelist's primary constituency. Chinweizu writes that one should consider the primary audience for whom the work is done and assess the distinctive cosmography of the African novel (Chinweizu, 1985).

What is not mentioned here is that there may be several primary constituencies, depending on the level of literacy, who do not necessarily share the same concepts and concerns. This is what Sartre labels the "double simultaneous postulation" in an analysis of the works of Richard Wright (Sartre, 1967).

Given this "double simultaneous postulation" the writer appears to address different audiences, the desires of which he feels he must try to reconcile. Bernard Mouralis, for example, has attempted to answer the question of audience by an analysis of the semantic content of the titles of African novels. Although his method is not always reliable, it demonstrates that the question of audience is an essential criterion for the evaluation of African literature (Mouralis, 1980).

Yet another factor has to be added when considering the question of readership: the use of a foreign language. Some critics tend to judge the universal character of the novels written in French or English while others (mainly Africans) reject this universality and advise the writer to emphasize his 'Africanness' in subject-matter, style, and language.

But it seems that these criteria - universality and Africanness - have an arbitrary character and are therefore difficult to handle. Instead, it is perhaps more rewarding to define the relationship between the writer and his audiences. In other words, how far does the writer identify himself with his audience, which audience, and how far does he meet the expectations of his readership. An answer to such questions makes it necessary to examine the role and place of the writer within his own society, his relationship to the dominant ideological structure, his own idea of his role and the others' reception of his role.

To be complete an evaluation of the question of audience should be combined with an analysis of literary forms used in the novels as well an analysis of the themes. Eliane Saint-André Utudjan suggests a reading of some modern African novels using the treatment of the theme of madness. Madness, as a recurrent theme in African literature, is very symptomatic of the situation of the novelists. Moreover, this theme should be understood within the African anthropological structures and world-view. Madness is also a theme which suggests the presence of existentialist attitudes among African writers. As Jung puts it, the archetype of the madman appears only in times of crisis.

b. The Approach Adopted Here.

To begin with it should be made clear however that this work is not concerned with the actual relationship between reality and literary form, or reality and the technical aspects of the novel. The focus is rather on the geography of one particular theme. In so doing there are a few facts which are deliberately taken for granted such as the question of audience. The complexity of the question of audience for an African novelist using a foreign language are a reality that is familiar to the average reader in African literature. In this study, the text is considered as a given datum and the interest is not in the relationship between the text and its literary form, or the technical aspects of the novel.

An initial interest was in the question of audience as one of the characteristics of the situation of the African novel. However, in the course of this research, it was discovered that this aspect has been covered by other people's research. For reference, two scholars have made significant contributions; the first one, Charles Bonn, has dealt with the novel of the Maghreb in his impressive Le Roman Algérien de Langue Française (1985). As for the African novel South of the Sahara, a piece of research worth a look is that of Phanuel Akubueze EGEJURU entitled The Influence of Audience on West African Novels (1973).

Charles Bonn comes to the conclusion that not only are literary texts influenced by what he calls the "textes fondateurs," but the expectations of the readership at large are also molded by the action of ideology. To him, because Algerian literature in French has contributed to the development of nationalism "l'idéologie sera donc tentée, à la fois *de lire* les textes à partir de ses propres besoins pédagogiques et de *susciter* des textes conformes à cette image qu'elle cherche à donner d'une littérature nationale fonctionnant comme *emblème*."(Bonn, 1985a, 324). Against this ideological attempt to seize the text, the true nature of a literary work resides in its *écart*, its *différence*. For Charles Bonn it is this going against the prevailing ideological current that makes the *lieu d'énonciation* of these literary texts ambiguous. Another dimension of this ambiguity is due to the fact that by writing in the language of a former colonial power there is necessarily another determination, that of the French readership which gives literary sanction only to those texts that conform to its own expectations.

Many of the conclusions reached by Charles Bonn also apply to the other African novels South of the Sahara. The same ideological command can be read

in many of the founding texts of African literature which have coincided with the emergence of nationalism. As to the question of audience, Phanuel Akubueze Egejuru (1980) attempts an answer through interviews of nine African writers, among whom the presence of the Algerian Mohamed Dib is quite symbolic. These interviews highlight a certain dualism. Although their first wish is to address a local audience they nevertheless acknowledge, sometimes reluctantly, that they also have in mind a foreign audience. It is indeed true that because these writers describe an African experience they expect their African readers to tune in more naturally. But this is only a wish. Who reads these novels beyond a specialised public? Is it not as Chinua Achebe says "anybody who can read and who is interested in the ideas I am expounding?" (Egejuru, 1980, 16).

Therefore when assessing the relationship between the African novelist and his reading publics, two audiences have to be considered: the European audience and the African readership. As concerns first the European audience, we wish to point out the limits of Western cultural and literary standards, and to criticize the taxonomic interpretations of African literature. Secondly, for the African audiences, some considerations will be devoted to the language criterion, that is the controversy between foreign and vernacular languages in literature, then to the question of influences, either foreign or traditional, and finally to the criterion of social criticism. But a crucial aspect of the question of audience must be examined in relation to the local-national reading public. It seems that there is first a large public, a large primary constituency which, to use Chinweizu's words, shares the same cosmogony and expects the writer to act as a social awakener or critic. Then, the writer is found to be addressing perhaps elite readers who are the real 'implied readers', the 'connoisseurs', the intelligentsia. Moreover there appears to be a tension between both those publics (large and elite) and the members of the ruling class. The latter are often not highly educated and expect the writer to act as a spokesman of the dominant ideology.(Bonn,1982).

It is the nature of these precise tensions and incompatibilities which seems to give birth to the position of the outsider in the African novel. As Jung suggested in his 'Psychology and literature', the archetype of the outsider is awakened whenever the times are out of joint and a human society is committed to a serious error. Our concern is not however, with a sociological analysis of the various existing errors but rather with the way a person (and especially a person who is a writer) becomes an outsider and how the latter lives this phase. Colin Wilson in The Outsider links the

birth of the outsider to the hero's passing through a shocking experience. An analysis of the theme of the outsider has therefore to identify and define the nature of this shock.

The novelists chosen for study in this work have written mainly autobiographical-type novels in which the hero is estranged from his own world, cultures, values, and language. Therefore this estrangement process can be can understood as happening in accordance with what Van Gennep calls the 'rites of passage', the typical pattern of departure-initiation-return. The process of departure begins with the young African entering the colonial school. This experience, being an uprooting for the child, already constitutes a certain kind of violence. This early period could be read as the beginning of a shocking experience, although some African writers have described it in rather romantic and nostalgic terms. But isn't nostalgia a feeling already familiar to the Outsider?

The initiation period, mostly the stay overseas, is also a form of shock; not only the shock of physical separation from home and relatives, but also the fact of living in a difficult cultural milieu, with values contradicting one's own, or the shock of black skins sharing the daily life of white skins. Without expanding the sociological implications of such arguments, the preoccupation will be to see how far this experience abroad is relevant to the constitution of the outsider's mentality and behaviour. This period will be essentially interpreted as being one cause of the outsider's misadaptation when he goes back home.

Indeed, it is the return period which is the most shocking part of the outsider's journey. As Colin Wilson puts it,

> these men (the outsiders) who had been projecting their hopes and desires into what was passing on the screen suddenly realize that they are in a cinema.... With the delusion of the screen identity gone..., they are confronted with a terrifying freedom... (and) completely new bearings are demanded. (Wilson, 1956, 67)

This is why the been-to who is back home feels generally frustrated and disillusioned, not only because his expectations are not met but also because he doesn't meet the expectations which the others have of him. This psychological split conveys an element of tragedy because there is generally no way out: the 'been-to' wants to cease to be an outsider and there is no way out. He sees "too deep and too much" and he understands that both his own and his society's salvation lies in extremes, insanity or even death. A study of this attempt by writers to come to grips with their social environment will be essentially done through the analysis of the theme of the outsider, with some comment on the treatment of madness as a particular

type of outsider characteristic.

The themes underlined so far (outsider, madman, creative hero, outcast and misfit) may also be understood as a form of African existentialism showing the absurdity of certain situations and the pessimism of the writers. However, this thematic analysis must be complemented by an assessment of the literary patterns and techniques used in the novels analyzed, in order to determine a desirable balance between form and content.

CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND READING AND AIMS

1. Texts Selected for Intensive Study and their Historical Location

The theme of contact with Europe has indeed been a privileged one for African novelists and travel literature in particular in which the Africans who had the opportunity to go overseas recounted their experience. An attempt to discuss all such texts in an exhaustive way would be beyond the aims and limits of this research[7].

The primary sources dealt with had necessarily to be restricted to a small number for the sake of clarity and commodity. An exhaustive and all inclusive study of all the African novels relevant to the chosen theme would be beyond our concern. Therefore, it was decided to concentrate on such African novels which meet the following criteria.

To begin with, the focus on African novels written by African writers in English and French. One direct aim is to abandon the distinction often made between francophone and anglophone writing in Africa, and to treat African novelists as belonging to a coherent literary whole.

Thus, and secondly, it was seen as important to include representatives from both North Africa (the Maghrib), and Africa south of the Sahara (i.e. black Africa). Within black Africa, it was necessary to consider writings from East, West, as well as South Africa, and also to analyse francophone black African novels as well as anglophone.

Finally and above all, the novels to be considered should be dealing not only with the theme of the West (that is the action of the novel taking place completely or in part in the West), but show a certain treatment of the theme which shows their heroes as outsiders.

Bearing these criteria in mind, the following novels were chosen for special study :

From North Africa

-French-speaking

Driss Chraibi (Morocco) Les Boucs (1955)

Rachid Boudjedra (Algeria) Topographie idéale pour une agression caractérisée (1975)

-English-speaking

Tayeb Salih (Sudan) Season of Migration to the North (1969)

From West Africa

-French-speaking

Cheikh Hamidou Kane (Senegal) L'aventure ambiguë (1961, rep 1983)
Bernard Dadié (Ivory Coast) Un nègre à Paris (1953)

-English-speaking

Ayi Kwei Armah (Ghana) Fragments (1974) The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born (1968, rep 1986), and Why Are We So Blest? (1972)
Chinua Achebe (Nigeria) No Longer at Ease (1960)

From East Africa

Meja Mwangi (Kenya) Going Down River Road (1976) and
Kill Me Quick (1973, rep 1986)
Akiki Nyabongo (Uganda), Africa Answers Back (1936)

From South Africa

Peter Abrahams A Wreath for Udomo (1956)
Ezekiel Mphahlele The Wanderers (1971)

Although geographical as well as language balances have been aimed at, it is obvious that some regions of Africa are bound to be more represented than others. This is the case for West Africa for example which is present here with four novelists. The reason for that is that some countries provide more examples of novelists owing to their early and voluminous literary production.

The motives that have governed this selection of novels would perhaps gain in clarity if they are replaced within the historical era to which they belong. The actual period covered would roughly start in 1936 with Africa Answers Back. If, however, one takes into account the fact that, regardless of its date of publication, a novel refers to or may refer to events that can go quite far back in time, and if it is recognised that many novelists write with a clearly articulated perspective on the history of the African/European confrontation, then it would perhaps become necessary to provide a rapid outline of Western European presence on the African continent. This outline is to situate the selected texts historically, and will rely considerably on a cultural survey of the history of Black Africa, The Breast of the Earth by the Ghanaian Kofi Awoonor. He talks of the pre-European history of Africa and reminds us that the African continent had known other contacts before the arrival of the white man but this was the

most traumatic one. The first contact (with Europe) that took place circa the fifteenth century started with a peaceful and mutually respectful relationship, one that was based on the exchange of manufactured goods for commodities such as pepper, gold, and ivory. The sixteenth century saw the extension of European contact with Africa especially with the development of "chartered companies" and the introduction of a new factor: slave trade. A literary account of this contact may be found in The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa the African, Written by Himself better known as Equiano's Travels.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw the intensification of European rivalry and of the slave trade which had become a very lucrative business for some of the big mercantile families of Western Europe and the growing settler-pioneer class of America. An element missing from this landscape is the missionaries who often served as the harbingers of European political powers and their gunboat diplomacy and who helped to consolidate that hegemony with their schools. A fictionalised version of this episode can be read in Cheikh Hamidou Kane's L'Aventure Ambiguë in which the reader is given to feel the two forces in action: the power of the guns and the power of the word, i.e. of the colonial school, the former backing the latter and vice-versa.

A direct result of this increased interest and intervention was the undermining of the institutions which had hitherto governed the African societies, seen by some of the writers to have been almost totally obliterated (e.g. Achebe) and by others to persist in spite of colonisation (e.g. Salih). With the trading operations in the towns of Africa came rapid urbanization along European lines which transformed the traditional structures drastically. Achebe's trilogy - Things Fall Apart, Arrow of God and A Man of the People - is a possible illustration of this disintegration of African traditional structures. In the process of undermining native political authority, "there were even efforts to send the sons of some chiefs to England where they received dubious education among the English aristocracy who found them exotically exciting. These men were supposed to become enlightened native arms of British colonial power" (Awoonor, 1975, 19).

As opposed to the British "indirect rule," the French direct rule proceeded on the assumption that the colonies were part of a metropolitan France, and their concept of the civilizing mission was based on a fundamental view of racial superiority which assumed political and cultural proportions. While the British left the cultural question intact, the French aimed at producing assimilés. They designed and directed their education programs towards the development of French men and women according to the

highest ideals of the republic. Africans were brought up as Frenchmen in the lycées and finally dispatched to the universities in France. The French succeeded in creating in these assimilés a long-lasting attitude of dependence, a fact which explains why some African soldiers were ready to die for France, whether in its anti-Nazi fight during the Second World War, in Indochina, or even in Algeria against legitimate and anticolonial freedom fighters.(Awoonor, 1975, 20). The psychological mechanisms of assimilation have been clearly exposed in Peau noire, masques blancs, one of the major works of a former French subject, the late Frantz Fanon. Another degree of assimilation as revealed in literature is also to be found for example in West African novels such as Aké Loba's Kocoumbo l'étudiant noir and Ousmane Socé's Mirages de Paris.

As regards their attitude to cultural matters, the French assimilation was an aggressive form of cultural imperialism. In comparison, the British choice of self-government in their relationship with their colonies ignored this cultural aspect and therefore left certain features of African culture intact. However, the colonisers shared one common instrument of contact with Africa: it was the Christian Church. They understood that: "religious propaganda was an essential aspect of imperial expansion, and the colonial powers had long grasped the important truth that it was cheaper in the long run to use the Bible than military power to secure distant dominions" (Awoonor, 1975, 21). Reinforced by the Berlin Act of 1885 many Christian Churches entered Africa as the instrument of the colonial powers, and many African writers would take it for granted that the propagation of the Christian faith always connoted the consolidation of imperial power. In his Arrow of God for example, Chinua Achebe has shown how by first appealing to outcasts, Christian teaching subverted the solidarity and integrity of African society.

One of the major instruments of Christian missionary work in Africa however was to be found in the school. Not that the idea of formal school had totally been unknown in Africa, but "a child who entered the Christian mission school was expected to cut his ties with the religious and ritualistic structure of his now-"pagan" family."(Awoonor, 1975, 24). In unquestioningly submitting to the precepts of his new teachers who encouraged him to reject his traditional identity, the early converts who embraced Christian dogma and life style were to constitute the first generation of educated Africans. This attempt to train away the African from his original way of life is well illustrated in Akiki Nyabongo's Africa Answers Back in which the focal figure is an African chief's son who is encouraged to join the mission school. In this novel the reader learns how

the pupils of the mission schools were encouraged to acquire European materialistic culture, and how they were inculcated with the superiority of the European way of life. The earlier generation gave their children European education in the professions: the law, medicine, and the church. It was this group, joined by the sons of a few chiefs, also educated abroad, who believed that they were the natural occupiers of the political seats later to be vacated by the whites (Awoonor, 1975, 27).

This attraction for the professions, and the tendency to copy European behaviour and outlook, are among the dominant themes of Aké Loba's Kocoumbo, l'étudiant noir and also of Ousmane Socé's Mirages de Paris. Durandeau in Kocoumbo, l'étudiant noir is an example of this tendency to copy European manners indiscriminately. He goes as far as changing his original African name to the European Durandeau which he believes to be a more "civilized" one. Once in Paris, he avoids the company of other Africans whom he calls savages and is determined to become as white as possible by frequenting Europeans exclusively. As Awoonor writes, "the new African intellectual was produced to deny the relevance of the African personality and culture to the new, aggressively "progressive" world.... The total result of all this is the basically wrong assumptions that the African still makes about European institutions". Such a glorification of Europe is certainly to be found in the behaviour of Fara, the focal figure of Ousmane Socé's Mirages de Paris. As is shown in the religious connotations that pervade his report of his first contact with the French capital, Fara is convinced that with his trip to Paris, he is going to the country where knowledge has come to an end. However, if Fara is remarkable for the degree of his assimilation, it is fortunately not the case with other colonial students such as Kocoumbo, to mention but one example.

Although some of the returning Africans were caught in the syndrome of reverse snobbery, it is among some of the African students who studied abroad in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that the intelligentsia who prepared the independence was to be recruited. The stirrings of nationalist ideas are to be seen in the hero of Africa Answers Back and its author Nyabongo was himself a proponent of Ugandan freedom, influenced by his long residence in the USA.

The Manchester Conference, which met in 1945 to discuss the question of colonial freedom, included figures such as George Padmore from Trinidad, who later became Nkrumah's African policy architect; Jomo Kenyatta, later President of Kenya; Kwame Nkrumah later president of Ghana; and a number of other African politicians. For the first time political activists from the New World met with young and restless agitators from Africa to draw up a

program for freedom. As is shown in the early chapters of Peter Abrahams' A Wreath for Udomo, the conference's charter attacked colonialism in pseudo-marxist language and exposed the so-called benevolent and civilizing aims of the colonial plan as sheer cant and hypocrisy. It drew attention to the degradation which economic tutelage led to and exposed the humiliation which the African peasants and workers were suffering within a system that claimed its basis in Christian ethics and morality. Abrahams' novel gives an authentic depiction of the atmosphere among the young nationalists in the period just after the Second World War, when a failure of nerve was already evident among the colonial powers and independence was seen to be within the African grasp.

Historically, the independence of India in 1947 was the most influential event for both anglophone writers and political activists and Kwame Nkrumah adopted Gandhian tactics in the Ghana struggle for independence of the late 1940's and early 1950's. Ten years after India, Ghana became "the first black nation south of the Sahara to gain independence from Britain. This event began the whole process of decolonization."(Awoonor, 1975, 42)

The first independence experiment in Ghana certainly had far-reaching effects on Africa. The All-African People's Conference held in Accra, in December 1958, a legitimate successor of the Manchester conference, provided within a free country a rallying point for African independence.

Meanwhile, in East Africa, the politicians were involved in a struggle with interests and foes more difficult to displace than those which had confronted the West Africans. The so-called Mau-Mau revolt in Kenya, a combination of a fight for land-rights with the fight for independence was the most dramatic illustration of this; and it has since generated many plays and novels and had a searing impact on the well-known Kenyan author, Ngugi wa Thiongo. His writings have influenced many of the younger Kenyan writers, including Meja Mwangi, whose Going Down River Road tackles a post-colonial theme, but has an underlying analysis of Kenya's problems borrowed from Ngugi.

By 1964, the British colonial empire in Africa virtually came to an end. With the dismantling of the ill-conceived Central African Federation, Central Africa became virtually self-governing, with the exception of the territory of Rhodesia, which was held by a white minority. Britain's remaining small dependencies, Gambia and the high commission territories of Swaziland, Lesotho, and Botswana were granted independence later.

The French colonial empire went through similar vicissitudes to those of the British. The 1944 Brazzaville Declaration led to expectations of post-war liberation in Africa in the 1940's and 50's. Some of the educated

Africans became involved in the movement for Black and African renaissance known as Présence Africaine, which enlisted the support of such major figures in the French intelligentsia as Jean-Paul Sartre and which held meetings in Paris and Rome in some ways cognate to that held in Manchester. This movement affected both Bernard Dadié and Cheikh Hamidou Kane, authors of two novels to be studied in this thesis.

Against a general background of instability in France, the country faced upsets in Indochina, where the colonial forces were pounded into defeat by the guerilla armies of Ho Chi Minh. This defeat had scarcely been adjusted to when the Algerian nationalists took to the mountains. France's dilemma was rooted in a colonial policy that treated colonies as departments metropolitan France. The *loi cadre* of 1956 introduced a measure of internal autonomy. In 1958 De Gaulle promulgated the Fifth Republic, which created the French Community, extended full internal self-rule to France's overseas territories, and brought the African territories under the new constitution. This constitution was decided by the famous *oui-ou-non* referendum which offered two options to the African territories. Only Guinea voted for full independence outside the Community and suffered the consequences of having all French technical assistance withdrawn. By August 1960 the Community's constitution was amended to allow independent African countries to remain members (along the same lines as the British Commonwealth, except that in the French system the socio-economic ties are stronger).

The main enclaves in sub-Saharan Africa left by the mid-1960's were the Portuguese-held territories of Angola, Guinea-Bissau, and Mozambique; the small scattered Spanish-held pockets on the coast of West Africa; the minority-ruled state of Rhodesia (now independent Zimbabwe), and the apartheid bastion of South Africa. the long, dark story, since the 1910 Act of Union in South Africa, of the entrenchment of a white minority and of the Afrikaner faction within that minority is well-known. The iniquities of the apartheid system have produced much literature by both Black and White writers. They have also led to the phenomenon of exile, so that some South African novelists have become observers of other African countries' development in the post-colonial era. Peter Abrahams' A Wreath for Udomo is an example of observation of the immediate post colonial period, while Ezekiel Mphahlele's The Wanderers gives a view of countries in a later stage of independence. Both react with sadness and revulsion to what each sees as the flaws of independent African states.

Awoonor, the Ghanaian, might assert that the reason for some of the problems is that these states are only nominally independent. For at least a while after the departure of the colonial powers - in the 1960's and 70's -

these states constituted a reservoir of raw materials, working in a system that is more favourable to the buyers than to the sellers. Moreover, as large percentages of their earnings were spent on imported manufactured goods, African countries have become heavily indebted to the European and American powers. The debts continue, while Africa's economic use to Europe has dwindled. Poverty and deep contrasts between rich and poor have become the new novelists' subject-matter, as exemplified in Meja Mwangi's Going Down River Road.

Besides this economic instability, Africa has fallen into the excesses of neo-colonialism. In the words of Awoonor, "many of the new leaders, acclaimed and catapulted to great heights by mass popularity, turn into cheap tyrants and petty crooks whose erstwhile virtues as anticolonial combatants are replaced by autocratic tendencies and who openly rifle the national coffers for private purposes."(Awoonor, 1975, 47).

The dilemma of the new leaders is illustrated in A Wreath for Udomo. The succession of military coups in Africa since 1965 has thrown the contradictions of African independence into bold relief. These coups in themselves are manifestations of a deep-seated malaise that has afflicted the African body politic, but at the same time, they bear testimony to Africa's search for some type of true cultural and economic independence. An illustration of the malaise that has characterised this period are the novels of A. K. Armah, namely The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born, Why Are We So Blest?, and R. Boudjedra's La Répudiation.

2. A Brief Review of Literature

a. Other Relevant African Fiction

In addition to the primary texts we have chosen to deal with, it was necessary to make reference to other secondary texts by the same authors or by other ones. When dealing with a novel by a given author, it was often found that for the sake of clarity, and in order to understand better its thematic and literary evolution, one had to make reference to earlier or later works by the same author. The following are a few examples of the thematic nearness that have been traced and to which reference will be made later.

Achebe's No Longer At Ease for instance could not be dealt with without making parallels with the other novels of his trilogy, i.e. Things Fall Apart, Arrow of God, and also to the later A Man of the People. It is for the same reasons of thematic and character evolution that Fragments had to be read in the light of Armah's first and third novels, i.e.: The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born, and Why Are We So Blest?. Boudjedra's Topographie

Idéale pour une Agression Caractérisée was equally examined bearing in mind that it was a sequel to its predecessors such as La Répudiation and L'Insolation among others, and also a precursor to subsequent novels such as Le Démantèlement.

Another principle that has governed the selection of secondary sources was one of regional affinity and thematic proximity. It is according to the first criterion that while dealing with Boudjedra's Topographie for instance it was needed to make reference to the Algerian Mouloud Feraoun who dealt with the theme of emigration in his La Terre et le Sang, Feraoun himself being a contemporary and friend of the Moroccan Driss Chraibi. In a similar way, it was found that the connecting theme was obvious enough to include for the purpose of comparison, a novel such as Camara Laye's L'Enfant Noir, in order to compare it with with Bernard Dadié's Un Nègre à Paris. In turn, the latter, because it described the way Paris was perceived by African students of the early post-independence era, was compared with two other novels the setting of which is Paris. These novels are: Aké Loba's Kocoumbo l'étudiant noir, and Ousmane Socé's Mirages de Paris. Kane's L'Aventure Ambiguë was also seen to compare with the above texts in so far as all of them represent the points of view of West African students about their contact with Paris.

The other principle, thematic affinity, has allowed us to make comparisons between countries, and also regardless of the language of expression. It is for this reason that such novels as Kane's L'Aventure Ambiguë and Nyabongo's Africa Answers Back can be found together. The former represent a muslim protagonist who was brought into contact with the materialistic values of the West. Likewise, the latter, despite its being East African, deals with the contact of an animist with Western religions. Again, in the same idea of making comparisons, the urban novels of the East African Meja Mwangi are seen to compare quite usefully, not only with Les Boucs by Driss Chraibi, but also with My Mercedes Is Bigger Than Yours by the Nigerian Nkem Nwankwo. Although the latter is of a less serious tone than Mwangi's novels, the connecting device is their common reliance on car imagery to convey a feeling of class-consciousness.

Another thematic likeness has led us to read Salih's Season of Migration to the North as being a response to an Egyptian novel the author must have read, The Saint's Lamp by Yahya Haqqi. As for Abrahams' A Wreath for Udomo, which is the point of view of a South African describing a country not his own, the parallel was obvious with the Sierra Leonean William Conton who, in The African, also writes about a country other than his. Both novels also share the same preoccupation with the problems of pre-independence in African states and the emergence of African elite to power.

b. Criticism: African and non African.

In addition to these primary sources, reference has been made to, whenever they were available, those critical works by the novelists themselves which could help an understanding of their novels. Therefore, general essays, literary criticism, and short stories by the novelists are also included. Let us take the example of one novelist to show how the selection of this critical material was done.

Armah's general essays on politics ("African independence revalued," "African socialism: utopian or scientific") and short stories (like 'An African Parable', 'Yaw Manu's Charm', and 'The Offal Kind') have been brought in to throw light on some particular aspects of his novels. His short stories were precursors in which one could already identify new character-types that are taken up later by the novelist and developed in subsequent novels such as The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born and Fragments for example.

Armah's views on African independence and African history were also to be complemented with a reference to his ideological tutor - Frantz Fanon whose writings he had come to appreciate during his stay in the United States as well as in a subsequent stay in Algeria - and also to his more recent novels such as Two Thousand Seasons and The Healers.

Another angle from which the novels of Armah were approached was a thematic one. To begin with, reference has been made to those relevant articles in periodicals and books that focused on his particular novels such as The Beautyful Ones, Fragments and Why Are We So Blest?, either taken individually or together. Then it was found useful to approach these novels through a thematic perspective. Armah's position as concerns artists and the arts, his use of the theme of madness, his disillusionment, his reference to the metaphysical world, are themes that are also reflected in the selection of articles about the novels, about Armah himself, or about the African novel in general.

The same approach was also applicable to writers like Chinua Achebe and Ezekiel Mphahlele. Achebe's other writings had to be mentioned, and particular attention was paid to his literary essays such as Morning Yet On Creation Day, to articles dealing with specific aspects of African writing such as language and audience, and also to his other works especially short stories such as How The Leopard Got his Claws, Chike and the River and Girls at War and Other Stories. As concerns Mphahlele, the choice has proved to be more difficult as his other writings are far more extensive. In fact, many of his works are autobiographical in tone and subject-matter. A solution was

therefore to rely on a checklist of the works of Mphahlele compiled by Skinner and Cornwell[8] and to refer primarily to those works that had an immediate link with The Wanderers, and also to related themes such as considerations on the phenomenon of exile and on literature in general.

As concerns the choice of other critical material, the guiding principle was to consult African critics whenever it was possible to do so. This attempt, by its very nature, inevitably situates itself within a controversy relating to the nature of the critical appraisal of African literature.

The problems inherent in the criticism of African literature were posed with a premonitory insight by Edgar Wright when he pointed to the necessity of some form of "objective, non-racial, and non-political criticism by Africans."(Wright E., 1966, 107). This statement is one of the conclusions of a detailed study of four critical approaches to African literature. In an article that now dates back to 1972, in which he surveys the works of three critics of African literature (Gerald Moore, Wilfred Cartey, and Janheinz Jahn), Ezekiel Mphahlele acknowledges that at a certain period most of the critical assessment of African literature has been the work of non-Africans. Visibly preferring a thematic approach such as Cartey's Whispers from a Continent, that does not discuss the novels in the conventional order of genre, national origin, or historical sequence, he understandably maintains, in accordance with Jahn, that literature has to be classified by the style and the attitudes revealed by the texts, and by fitting individual works into a tradition of similar styles and attitudes. (Mphahlele, 1972b).

One such approach is the Sociologie du Roman Africain by Sunday Ogbonna Anozie. In this analysis, he shows that West African novels belong to the same literary space. It is devoted to an examination of thematic and structure patterns with a focus on the central character which he sees is 'determined' by a particular social situation. He also underlines the 'messianic' tendencies of the African novel, and views the hero as a model of a true social pioneer, a man with practical vision and a clairvoyant mind.

The danger implicit in some forms of European criticism is summed up by Mphahlele in his quotation of Joseph Okpaku who said:

> The primary criticism of African art must come from Africans using African standards... When the Western critic looks at an African work he immediately tries to find out which Western work it best resembles so he can use this to establish communication with the Western reader.... (quoted in Mphahlele, 1972b, 77)

There is therefore a risk of transferring cultural concepts from one literature to another. Criteria such as the handling of language, form and imagery, and the use of political and cultural concepts are not totally reliable. The question is posed in the following terms by Edgar Wright: "Is this new body of writing to be judged as an extension of literature in English, and by the international standards associated with it, or does it, for cultural and linguistic and possibly other reasons, require some quite different critical basis?"(Wright E., 1966, 106).

One possible compromise is an adjustment between national and international standards (although they need to be defined), a balance which seems quite difficult to attain. One agrees that it is equally difficult to avoid the conclusion that a literature written in European languages must also take place within the total body of such literatures. The danger of such an approach is that, in the words of Chinweizu, it views African literature as "an overseas department of European literature"(Chinweizu, 1985, 3).

This type of approach has indeed found fertile ground especially because most African writers had, by necessity, written for a Western audience. This indeed points to the controversy as to which audience the African writer is actually addressing, as opposed to the ideal and often imagined one he has in mind. It is not the subject of this study to embark any further in this controversial and still debated issue. However, I believe that the elements of an answer have been aptly formulated by Abiola Irele when he says that, in the final instance, "the criticism of African literature must take as its aim the creation of a public at home, to provide a basis for it here in order to foster its healthy development."(Irele, 1971, 24).

The point of the preceding remark however serves to explain that in the choice of critics referred to in this study, preference was often given to the African critic/reader who endeavours to explain the African novel within an African context. Priority was given to those critics who showed what Irele calls a 'sociological imagination.' In this respect, I fully share his view that a good critic is a sort of 'middleman', someone who starts with an intuition, and gives it an intellectual formulation in order to explain to the large numbers what is unfortunately accessible only to elite readers. In his view,

> The African reference of an African work can be elucidated... by approaching the work with an insight into, and a feeling for, those aspects of African life which stand beyond the work itself, its extension into the African experience, and its foundations in the very substance of African existence.(Irele, 1971, 16)

This insight however is not the strict equivalent of Africanity. It is not enough to be an African, and this does not guarantee good criticism. As this depends on a total experience, one may well find bad African critics and good European ones. An example of original African criticism is New West African Literature by the late Kolawole Ogungbesan in which he rightly transcended the language and national barriers so as to present side by side Francophone and Anglophone novelists from West Africa. A similar, though a more modest attempt in size, is Margaret Amosu's bibliography Creative African Writing in the European Languages which includes North African writers.

An effort has therefore been made here to avoid the type of European taxonomic criticism that aimed at making categories that did not leave room for a comparative approach. Such categories are often made on the basis of geography, colour, or language. The last type is what Mphahlele calls the imperial type of attitude in which a native speaker/critic sets out to examine how the language is being handled in the literature of the ex-colonial territories.

Another reason for discarding some European approaches, and some French sources in particular, derives from this attitude. The focus was on the less sentimentally charged approaches to African literature. This is not to say that every French critic who examines the literature of the Maghreb for example has an unconscious colonial bias. There are indeed quite intelligent analyses such as those of Charles Bonn and Jacques Madelain for example. Charles Bonn is a French critic who has had first hand contact with the Maghreb and its literature. In his reading of the Algerian novel in particular, he uses a double standpoint. He views the fictional works both from the point of view of an outsider and that of an insider. He shows how determinant the role of the French reading public has been in bringing Algerian novelists to the forefront of literary fame when they conformed to its expectations. He also illustrates quite aptly the nature of the constraints the Algerian Francophone novelist faces in his own country, both in terms of what he calls the 'ideological command' and the specificity of his undefined readership. Jacques Madelain in his L'errance et l'itinéraire proposes to catch the movement of Maghrebine Francophone literature. Unlike Charles Bonn, he devotes his work to the tracking down of particular themes such as "l'espace paradoxal," and "l'identité et la différence." As he writes in the "Liminaire" opening the book, "Ce texte est un essai sur les romans maghrébins de langue française, le compte rendu d'une lecture personnelle et non une présentation générale de ce domaine littéraire qui aurait l'ambition d'être objective et complète."(Madelain, 1983, 9). In so

doing Madelain expresses feelings that are akin to those of Maghrebine critics such as Abdelkébir Khatibi. In his critical works, the latter shows the nature of the Maghrebine 'différence', and insists on the way they have appropriated the French language and made it alien to its original speakers.

Such an insight is also the major quality of some North American sources of criticism. Black American critics have also developed a major interest in African literature. In general, they oppose the kind of sentimentality referred to by giving highly partisan approaches, and therefore are not the object of study here. The Canadian-based André Hédi Bouraoui, who is of Tunisian descent, combines the qualities of an insider, because of his sense of belonging, with those of an outsider who is totally remote from the area of his research. It is also this distance that allows some of the American critics to bring in a fresh perspective which is often difficult to achieve for any critic who is too close both to the subject and to the area of his study. Newcomers to the field such as the American Danielle Marx-Scouras and Louis Tremaine, or Anne-Marie Nisbet from Australia, seem to me to examine this literature with fewer prejudices. Marx-Scouras for example has developed the interesting concept of 'poetics of illegitimacy' to refer to that cultural limbo which is so typical of the Maghrebine Francophone writers. In her view, this literature has no regard for borders and it conveys the "troubling and productive dimension of a cross-cultural writing which belongs neither to France nor the Maghreb. To the disconcertion of critics, it threatens the sacrosanct idea of literary nationality."(Marx-Scouras, 1986, 3).

Another original concept is formulated by Louis Tremaine when he refers to the Maghreb as being a specific literary zone. In The Concept of Literary Zone in the Criticism of Maghrebian Literature, he examines notions such as literary nationality and Africanity among others.

In opposition to this foreign criticism of African literature, a recent trend claims that the only valid option is a truly African standpoint. This opinion is expanded in two books: Toward the Decolonization of African Literature by the West Africans Chinweizu, Jemie and Madubuike, and Standpoints on African Literature by the East African Chris Wanjala.

Wanjala shares with Irele the concept of the critic as a middleman. He attributes to the critic the same function as the doctor's. While the dustmen clear our streets of refuse, the doctors cure our body, he writes, "so we need critics to purge our minds and prescribe the means of cultural health."(Wanjala, 1973, xviii). With Bahadur Tedjani and Clive Wake, he agrees on the existence of "common political, social and literary preoccupations of African writers... a oneness which exists in spite of... the fact that some are writing in French and under the influence of French

culture, while others are writing in English under the influence of English culture."(Tedjani, 1973, 30).

Wanjala's message is also addressed to writers to whom he proposes what he calls the Tabanic genre. The term was coined from Taban Lo Liyong who suggested a program to correct "literary barrenness in East Africa". In order to fight the stagnation of creativity in East Africa, it urged the writers to assume and advocate Africa's manhood.

Though it is different in tone, it is not a dissimilar message that is voiced by Chinweizu, Jemie and Madubuike. Seeing themselves as "*bolekaja*" [mammy wagon] critics[9], they insist on the truth of Sartre's observation that "every literary text is built out of a sense of its potential audience," and that the Africans are the consumers, the primary audience, the primary *constituency* of the African novels.

From the start, Chinweizu et al admit that the "book is unabashedly polemical and pedagogical." In Africa's present situation," they write, "Africa's prose literature is under attack from a dominant and malicious eurocentric criticism."(Chinweizu, 1985, 6). Like Wanjala, Chinweizu et al say that the "book is directed at aspiring young writers who need good models to imitate."(Chinweizu, 1985, 6). Their aim is to identify an emerging primary audience, "recognizing the characteristic marks of its traditional discourse, and positing a theory of literary form and function of its tradition."(Knipp, 1985, 121).

Beyond the polemic that has surrounded this 'bolekaja' criticism appears the urgent need for African literature to have an original body of criticism. As Jonathan Ngate notes

> 'Bolekaja' criticism... is calculated to leave no one indifferent: to the extent that it succeeded in keeping us talking and writing about African literature from an Afrocentric perspective (even if no answers are found immediately!) it would have achieved what I perceived to have been the goal of the authors of Toward the Decolonization of African Literature."(Ngate, 1985, 113).

Is it, as Knipp suggests, that the best place to look for Africa's literary future is Africa's traditional past?

c. General Background Studies

In addition to particular thematic studies and to a general introduction to the state of literary criticism of African literature, the need was also felt to have access to more general writings about a particular period, a particular group of writers, a specific area.

There are roughly four geographical areas that correspond to the regions the different novelists come from. The first block is North Africa, or the

Maghrib. The second area is West Africa, with representatives from both its anglophone and its francophone parts. At the other end of the geographical spectrum, it was chosen to deal with East Africa, with the exception of Sudan which is meant to provide the link between East Africa and North Africa. Another area of study is the more specific context of South Africa.

Thus, the general books about the literature of North Africa to be consulted were references such as Jean Déjeux's Dictionnaire des auteurs maghrébins de langue française, and his Littérature maghrébine, introduction générale et auteurs. For Black Africa, the main sources were Stephen Arnold's African Literature Studies, Simon Gikandi's Reading the African Novel and Wole Soyinka's Myth, Literature and the African World to cite but these titles.

Then, as the focus was on more geographically restricted areas, attention was paid to studies dealing respectively with the North African, the West African, the East African, and the South African novels, supplementing these references with other thematic approaches focusing on the questions of audience/readership, language, politics, and other themes bearing relevance to our subject.

d. Conceptual Framework Arrived At.

There are two basic assumptions that have determined the way the novels are approached in this study. An initial interest is in looking for, in the novels, the extent to which commonality or individuality in the focal figures is expressed. Therefore, special attention has to be paid to the "lieu d'énonciation" from which the novel is written. Whenever there is an identity of beliefs and expectations as concerns the outcome of the voyage, that is when the narration is done from within the community, the narratives insist on the presence of insiders who are looking at their own societies. But as the divergence grows, as the novels become more recent, the observer is less and less in the position of the insider. He is found to be casting an external eye on his society which he views from without. These two extremes are what will be referred to as being the communal man and urban man.

The other assumption is that there is a correspondence between the sophistication of the literary form on the one hand, and the complexity of the message on the other. The linear and straightforward narratives refer to a harmonious world, a world the values of which are still being respected. It corresponds to the "Bildungsroman" or novels of education in which chronology is respected. But as the structures of these societies start changing, as their values are being threatened, and the relationship between the group and the been-to deteriorates, the point of anchorage no longer

exists. As a consequence emerge focal figures who are no longer in harmony with their milieu, and who, as they become more and more isolated, enter into conflict with their own communities.

The narratives can then be seen to become less and less linear, their structures more tormented, and even the concept of the hero changes to that of the anti-hero, as it gradually gives way to that of the outsider with the appearance of figures such as that of the madman.

3. The Underlying Purpose - A New Reading of the Contemporary African Novel.

Our desire in this work is to achieve a new reading of the contemporary African novel, a reading that is both thematic and comparative. In the past, the studies that dealt with African literature were largely taxonomic; the Africanists were interested in classifying the various writings into genres and in determining their relationship to a European model from which, it was thought, the African novelists largely copied. Achebe for instance was said to have been influenced by Joseph Conrad, and the critics stressed the similarities in technique between Yacine Kateb and William Faulkner. In the eyes of these critics, it was important to emphasise the debt Rachid Boudjedra owes to the French "Nouveau Roman," or the links that Ayi Kwei Armah might have with the French existentialists. In our opinion however, what one should be looking for when reading the African novel is not the link that may exist between the African novel and its European counterpart. It is a known fact that in literature borrowing is a normal practice. Tracing the precise nature and extent of these borrowings would be justified in a field such as comparative literature. The purpose of this thesis is to draw the geography of a particular theme, the theme of the voyage to the West. Through the analysis of this particular theme and other related sub-themes that are common to many African novels, regardless of the language used, the aim of this study is to show that the previous linguistic and geographical divisions are a hindrance to a good understanding of the real relationship that exists between the various African countries and their novelists. Previous researchers have given too much importance to the language difference between francophone and anglophone writers. It was rare to find a Maghrebine novelist alongside a West African one for example. If it is taken for granted that the phenomenon of the Outsider in African literature is a normal step which is determined by certain social and political conditions, and that it determines whether the writer identifies himself or not with his readership and vice-versa, if one concentrates on

the theme of alienation or madness as being one of the manifestations of the feeling of being an outsider, it becomes possible to highlight the similarities of concern, vision, and attitude among African writers and African countries as a whole, thus giving the adjective African, in the space of this study, a meaning that encompasses not only West Africa or sub-Saharan Africa for example, but also and ultimately Africa as a totality.

PART TWO: PRESENTATION OF THE NOVELS

Introduction to Part Two.

Despite our claim to reach a certain balance both in terms of geography and language some of the novelists receive more attention than others, therefore giving this study a slightly unbalanced outlook. Why are certain authors discussed in more detail than others, and why for some of them is only a single novel discussed? The reason behind this apparent discrepancy is to be related both to the nature of our theme and to the individual differences that exist from one novelist to the other. Some novelists like Cheikh Hamidou Kane have written only one novel and then stopped under the pressure of various commitments; others, like Tayeb Salih, Ezekiel Mphahlele, Peter Abrahams, and Chinua Achebe have dealt with the contact with another culture in one novel only and then shifted their concern to other subject matters. The remainder, i.e. Rachid Boudjedra, Driss Chraibi, Meja Mwangi and Ayi Kwei Armah, have covered the theme of the voyage in a more extensive manner. To begin with the case of the Sudanese Tayeb Salih. Apart from the autobiographical narrative of Season of Migration to the North, he has written a collection of short stories grouped under the volume entitled The Wedding of Zein and also a multi-volume series entitled Bandar Shah which contains two novels, and has stopped writing since. His early writings display a common orientation. Instead of

> focusing upon the modern, urban man," C.E.G. Berkeley indicates that in his short stories,"El Tayeb Salih is concerned with the rural Afro-Arab Sudanese as he follows his traditional religious and social customs in a timeless village community, whose historical and emotional link with the past is constantly threatened by the forces of change emanating from the larger world surrounding the village. (Berkeley, 1980, 105)

Season of Migration to the North is given the same locale as the previous short stories. But although Tayeb Salih still concentrates on the life of the rural community of the village of Wad Hamid, he illustrates, by the use of a double focal figure, the conflict that exists between the rural and the urban man, the traditional and the educated. This device epitomizes the two conflicting desires that exist in a 'been-to': on the one hand, Mustafa Sa'eed stands for the culturally alienated one who, despite his return to traditional Sudan, is still mentally living overseas and, on the other hand, Mihaimid, who although he has spent the formative years of his adolescence in the 'North' (read the West), manages, after a dramatic internal conflict, to reconcile the values of his ancestral world with those he has acquired in the West.

Some of the writers, such as Cheikh Hamidou Kane, have produced only a single novel; having tackled this theme of the voyage overseas, he has not written anything since. "He has been working on a second novel that, like L'Aventure Ambiguë, will show the effects of the collision of divergent cultures, but concern itself as well with the emergence of traditional Africa into the contemporary world." (Erickson, 1979, 189). One explanation of Cheikh Hamidou Kane's failure to produce another novel could be the lack of writing time. Since his return to Africa in 1959 he has had an absorbing career in the public service. He has been Director of Economic Planning for Senegal, Governor of the region of Thiès, and Commissioner of Planning in Mamadou Dia's government. He also worked for a number of years in the seventies as an official for UNICEF in Lagos and Abidjan. He is at present Senegal's Minister of Industrial Development.

It is characteristic of the African novelist to be rarely seen as a full-time writer. Authors of Bernard Dadié's generation, like Cheikh Hamidou Kane and Ferdinand Oyono for example, have long stopped writing because of other pressures. This is not the case for Dadié. Despite the importance of his present political responsibilities - he is Minister of Culture and Information in Ivory Coast - he has continued to write creatively and is one of the major names of the first generation of francophone African authors. He is a prolific writer and has publications in every genre - the novel, poetry, plays and the short story. The list includes essays, tales and critical pieces as well as his lesser-known political writings of the early fifties (sometimes published under a pseudonym), when he was a militant nationalist. Our focus will be deliberately put on his prose writings: Un Nègre à Paris (1959), Patron de New York (1965), and La Ville Où Nul Ne Meurt (1968). These three chronicles are the accounts of visits he made to Paris, New York and Rome.

> In all these works, declares Bernard Dadié,there is no imagined character whom we can follow through the adventures and ups and downs of his life. To the contrary this is a real character, always myself, who looks, who examines the customs, mores, the cultures of people (French, Italian, American) and who judges relative to the customs, mores,the culture of my people, in an effort to discern the differences and the points of community in the perspective of universal humanism. (Richard Bonneau, quoted in Janis A. Mayes,106)

His three chronicles, which cover almost a decade, are not only marked by an unchanging *modus operandi* but also use similar techniques of writing. If we have chosen to concentrate on his first chronicle, it is with the belief that it is his most representative one.

For the Maghrebine writers whom we include in this study, the situation is much the same. Neither the Algerian Rachid Boudjedra nor the Moroccan Driss Chraibi is to be seen as an exclusively full-time writer. After an early contact with the Algerian War of Liberation when he joined the 'maquis' at the age of seventeen in 1959, Boudjedra was soon involved in political activities as a representative of the Algerian FLN party in Spain during the Algerian war. Unable to settle permanently in the newly independent Algeria - he had already published La Répudiation (1969) and L'Insolation (1972) which were to be banned in his country - he lived in Paris and Rabat until 1975. After the publication of his Topographie Idéale pour une Agression Caractérisée (1975), a sophisticated and tragic odyssey of an illiterate Algerian emigrant in Paris, he returned to Algeria where he became successively adviser at the ministry for Information and Culture, reader at the state-owned SNED publishing house, and lecturer at the Institute for Political Science in Algiers. Now living permanently in Algeria - but with a secure foot in France however - he has recently joined the Algerian League for Human Rights. Despite his various commitments, Rachid Boudjedra continues to write, accumulating nine novels in French to date, the most recent of which he affirms, are translations of his original narratives written in Arabic, not to mention other writings in other genres. As far as his work is concerned, it becomes more delicate to justify which works are relevant and which are not. If we keep as a criterion the presence of the theme of the voyage overseas, it is indeed Topographie that fits best. This third novel is generally regarded as constituting a turning point in Rachid Boudjedra's literary career. Earlier novels are the products of a novelist who casts a critical eye on Algeria and its political post-independence leadership, therefore conforming to the expectations of the French left and reading public. As a matter of fact it is with La Répudiation that he became known both in Algeria and in France where he was to receive the 'Prix des Enfants Terribles' in 1970. But if the theme is enlarged to a more general preoccupation with the emergence of the outsider, then most if not all of his novels written in French would present some relevance. Apart from Topographie, La Répudiation and L'Insolation already announce themes that are taken up in his other novels.

Driss Chraibi's early itinerary is similar to Boudjedra's. A product of the traditional Koranic school, he joins, as he reports it in his first novel Le Passé Simple (1954), the French school in Casablanca at the age of ten before going overseas, at the age of nineteen. Initially intending to become a chemical engineer, he switches to studies in neuro-psychiatry which

are later interrupted as he starts wandering around Europe and doing various jobs. Unlike Boudjedra, Chraibi refuses to write best-sellers because, in so doing, he would loose the sensitivity of the artist. Like his Yalann Waldik in Les Boucs, "les périodes où Chraibi vécut de sa plume sont rares. Il connut des moments difficiles et dut exercer d'autres activités pour subvenir à ses besoins et plus tard à ceux de sa famille." (Kadra-Hadjadji, 30-1)

The case of the Ghanaian Ayi Kwei Armah can be seen as constituting a transition between the Francophone Maghrebine writers on the one hand - who are largely under the influence of French thinking - and, on the other hand, the Anglophone Black African writers who are more British oriented in their sources of reference. Following his education at the typically British Achimota College in Accra, he was to graduate from leading American universities before returning to Africa. Since his "reverse crossing" Armah had taken up various jobs in various places on the continent. His being influenced by the work of Frantz Fanon - who at one time was the Algerian FLN ambassador in Accra - and also by French existentialism accounts for his unusual situation in Anglophone West Africa. His first novel The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born which was published in 1968 was to establish his international stature. The other novels are the successes we know. It is important to note that it is during his stay in East Africa - while he was learning Kiswahili successively teaching at the College of National Education at Chang'ombe in Tanzania and later African literature and creative writing at the National University of Lesotho - that he wrote his next three novels: Why Are We So Blest?, Two Thousand Seasons and The Healers. Armah's last three novels indicate how the author has moved from "the tight circle of largely Ghanaian concerns to embrace a world view, a total vision of the contemporary world whose limits of reference are defined as America, the Muslim Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa." (Fraser, 1980,48)

Like Ayi Kwei Armah, Meja Mwangi from Kenya has also unsuccessfully tried his hand at a journalistic career, working with a broadcasting company in Kenya.He has himself acknowledged that a writing career does not pay much, and that as a consequence, there is no full-time writer as such.The few novels he has written have not, in his own words, earned him enough income, especially in Kenya where the publishing houses tend to prefer popular literature such as thrillers to a more serious type of literature. Meja Mwangi has tried his hand at various genres.He has produced historical novels that focused on the Mau Mau movement, and he has also written social or urban novels in which he described the plight of poor people in cities, in addition to a recent desire to turn to a more popular form of literature

with a thriller. Taste of Death (1975) and Carcase for Hounds (1974) belong to the category of historical novels. They illustrate Meja Mwangi's concern with the Mau Mau episode. In Taste of Death the existence of themes such as violence and prison announce Mwangi's later emphasis on the oppressive urban environment. These urban novels are no longer concerned with the historical past of Kenya, but about the present.The second major aspect of Mwangi's concern is evident in Kill Me Quick, namely his committed and sensitive response to the problems of the poor and downtrodden of his own generation.

Among Mwangi's seven novels we have chosen not to deal with the historical ones, the Mau Mau novels which were Meja Mwangi's own interpretation of Kenya's recent history. We are not dealing either with the thriller type novels such as The Bushtrackers and Bread of Sorrow which aimed at a wider readership by yielding to the exigencies of suspense and the rules of the thriller. Our analysis will be restricted to Going Down River Road and Kill Me Quick. The former fits our outline in so far as it illustrates a process of internal departure, leading to an alienating situation within Kenya, although it excludes the element of the voyage abroad. The theme of the voyage is however present, although it takes place from the country to the city - implicit in Going Down River Road and explicit in Kill Me Quick - at the end of which the focal figures become totally marginalized beings.

Ezekiel Mphahlele is also a similar case. Apart from an impressive amount of critical work, short stories and a recently published autobiography, only The Wanderers, among his book-length writings, coincides with our thematic criteria. At this point one should perhaps add that both Meja Mwangi and Ezekiel Mphahlele constitute exceptions to the rule. With all the other novels presented in this section, the voyage takes the focal figure overseas, that is not only abroad but to the West. For Meja Mwangi the voyage is internal. If there is a voyage it takes place from the countryside to the urban centers; it is an internal voyage that moves the hero across the social classes and the social scale. With Ezekiel Mphahlele, the voyage is of a different nature. Although the hero crosses different borders into different countries, he is still in Africa and deals with Africans who are not fundamentally different from his equals in South Africa.

One who travelled to a totally different world right away is Peter Abrahams. Unemployed after his schooling at St Peter's College, South Africa where he was acquainted with Ezekiel Mphahlele, he soon finds life thwarting and it is as a stoker on a ship that he leaves South Africa before settling in Britain in 1941. As a journalist he later returns to Africa for a series of articles on Kenya and South Africa. After this traumatic experience which he recounts in Return to Goli (1953) he settled in Jamaica where he has now

lived since 1957. After his first novel - Song of the City (1945) - which followed a collection of short stories - Dark Testament (1942) - several of his novels concentrate on South Africa. Mine Boy (1946) illustrates the condition of black South Africans under a white regime of apartheid, a theme that is again continued with the multi-racial love romance described in The Path of Thunder (1948) and also in A Night of their Own (1965) which concentrates on the motives and tensions within the racial struggle in South Africa and the role of Indians in the underground resistance movement. South African history is the subject of Wild Conquest (1950) His impressions of his return from Africa are the texture of Return to Goli (1954), whereas Tell Freedom (1954) is an autobiographical novel relating the first twenty-two years in the life of the author. His other two novels are about his land of adoption, Jamaica, with Jamaica: an Island Mosaic (1957) and This Island Now (1966), recently followed by The View from Coyaba (1985). One novel only deals with the theme of the voyage overseas and the return to Africa: it is A Wreath for Udomo (1956) which we have chosen for analysis.

One more remark should also be made about the arrangement of the presentation of these novels, that is the order in which they are examined here. To begin with, one will notice that they are arranged in a way that does not respect chronology mainly because this appears to be an irrelevant criterion. If we look at the case of Driss Chraibi's Les Boucs for example, then a chronological type of analysis would put it among the first ones to be examined. However a closer reading shows that it displays techniques of writing that are more modern than the period of its publication. The geographical criterion is also to be discarded as it would give a lion's share to West African writing only and leave the rest unnoticed.

For the reasons mentioned, we prefer to present these novels within some kind of thematic spectrum. At one end of this spectrum we will see that the focal figure of the novel is identified with the communal man, with the group at large. The middle passage will prove to be characterised by a certain fragmentation of the beliefs of the focal figure along with a growing questioning of the nature of the contract and duties he might have towards the group. At the other end of the spectrum we would like to identify the way this is seen by the detribalised man, the urban man for whom there is no contract and no point of anchorage. At the same time the novels will also be arranged with regard to their complexity. Whereas the first ones to be dealt with would be linear narratives, as we go along the novels will prove to become more and more sophisticated as will be seen in the second part of this study.

The discussion of Un Nègre à Paris is largely based on the question of readership. It is meant to serve as a general framework for the way the question of audience has to be approached. These considerations are subsequently taken as given data, a given background for the other chosen novels which are discussed on the basis of a structural and thematic analysis.

CHAPTER THREE

UN NEGRE A PARIS

Critics of African literature more or less acknowledge the existence of several layers of readership. Claude Wauthier for instance calls them "l'Africain" on the one hand, and on the other "l'esprit humain en général". According to him, the early African novelist belonging this period of "résurrection" presents his exploration of African folklore under two major aspects, "the first one oriented towards the African in particular, and the other one towards the human spirit in general." (Chevrier, 1981)

These two categories are however imprecise. Equally imprecise are the insertions of Dadié in various anthologies of African writing, or in other books popularizing African novels. This is the case of Jacques Chevrier who mentions the question of audience in relation, first, to thematic changes in the evolution of the African novel, and second, its "espace littéraire," and goes on to formulate his hypothesis in terms of universalism versus "enracinement," this relationship being further complicated by the use of a colonial foreign language. Chevrier situates Dadié's works within a chronological outset. This is why he presents Dadié with reference to two excerpts, one from Climbié which he entitles "le symbole," the other one from Les Jambes du Fils de Dieu entitled "Pétain ou de Gaulle". But above all, it seems that Chevrier wants to illustrate the similarities in evolution between the African and the European novel.

In this anthology he distinguishes two major stages in the evolution of the African novel: an early one where themes were still linked with the colonial environment, the conflicts between cultures, between tradition and modernity, and a more recent stage where he maintains that the writers' attempts to renew their relationship with their traditional public through thematic and language change. To Chevrier, because of his double concern with universalism and "enracinement," "l'espace littéraire de l'écrivain Africain est devenu problématique".

The whole complexity of Dadié's readership is summed up by the novelist himself when he writes:

> Cette fièvre de dépersonnalisation doit inquiéter des Parisiens qui préfèrent nous étudier à travers nos masques. Nos larmes et nos rires, nos craintes et nos rêves, nos amours, seuls nos masques les peuvent traduire avec fidélité. Certains cependant cherchent à nous connaitre par les ouvrages de nos écrivains, par notre théâtre, les moyens d'expression dont nous disposons. Mais ramenant tout à leur mesure, à leur façon de voir, ils regardent la plupart du temps nos œuvres avec les yeux qu'ils ne faut pas. Chercher à connaitre témoigne de leur part un louable effort lorsqu'on sait que des

> compatriotes se vantent de n'avoir jamais ouvert un livre de Nègre. (Un Nègre, pp.203-204).
> ["Some Parisians, who are worried by our being so eagerly depersonalized, prefer to study us through our masks. Indeed only these can faithfully render our tears and laughter, our fears and dreams, our loves. Others, however, seek to know us through the works of our writers, our plays, and the means of communication that we have. But most of the time, they look at our works with the wrong eyes, because they judge us according to their own yardsticks. However their efforts are all the more praiseworthy if compared to those of some of our compatriots who make it a point of pride to have never opened a book written by a black man."]

In quite an explicit manner Dadié admits the existence of three types of readers and therefore presumably directs his message to them. As shown by the passage from "des Parisiens" to "nos masques" the author first refers to that approach to African literature which emphasises its superficial aspects, or as suggested by the ambivalent meaning of the word 'masks' the anthropological approach which tends to consider African novels as mere documents for the interest of the ethnologist and the anthropologist. The second type of reader is referred to in the sentence :"par les moyens d'expression dont nous disposons... mais ramenant tout à leur mesure... ils regardent avec les yeux qu'il ne faut pas." Although this second type of reader is familiar with the African literary production, he sees it through a looking glass, an ethnocentrist prism which distorts the object of study. The last category is "des compatriotes (qui) se vantent de n'avoir jamais ouvert un ouvrage de Nègre" that is his countrymen who are clearly under the spell of a cultural conditioning which makes them forget and devalue their own culture.

In my opinion however, the nature of the reading public presumably evolves over time and is imagined differently by different authors. Dadié's reading public is best defined by another critic, Janis A. Mayes, who, in an article on Bernard Dadié, makes a distinction between the implied reader and the real reader. According to her, the chronicles of Dadié make use of two "lieux d'énonciation," or come from an intermediary place between these two poles. On the one hand, Dadié speaks to the European as can be seen when African symbols and key-words are transposed into their European equivalents, but on the other, he addresses the African when the same symbols are compared with their European counterpart with which they may not be familiar.

Our analysis concentrates more on the "lieux d'énonciation" from which the novel is written with reference to the literary techniques used in the chronicle. Dadié's subtle combination of reverse exoticism and shifting

persona shows a specific awareness of (a) chosen audience(s). Dadié is in turn the African speaking to the European, the African addressing a wide African public, and also the African whispering in the ear of a more restricted élite readership, a more competent reader. In each case Dadié uses the same pattern: to begin with, he addresses his reader by using his own keywords, then he explains terms which he thinks he may not be familiar with and finally borrows the point of view of his reader for a specific purpose. In stressing the "lieux d'énonciation" from which the novel is written, our aim is to show how Dadié addresses several audiences. One aspect is that of the African speaking to a French/European audience, and the other aspect, that of the African addressing Africans but with a distinction between the real reader and the supposed reader. As a consequence of this split among the audiences and the situation of the novelist, the chronicle seems to be linked with the expression of the position of the outsider.

The title of the novel gives a precise definition of the "lieu d'énonciation": Un Nègre à Paris suggests a spatial movement from Africa to Paris. The reference to the two worlds is explicit also in the title, with perhaps a hint at the picaresque aspect of the novel. Moreover the association of 'Nègre' and Paris also reveals the symbolic aspect of the book. Like Montesquieu's Lettres Persanes or Graham Greene's A Journey Without Maps, Un Nègre à Paris is a good example of the various functions of the travel book as a literary form - "suitable as a contribution to a more objective observation of both oneself and one's own culture, as an encouragement to international contacts, and leading to the evaluation of the diverse contributions of different cultures towards the enrichment of our twentieth century cosmopolitan way of life." (Thomas, M.A., 1). In Un Nègre there are several personae. Tanhoé Bertin, the narrator of Un Nègre à Paris, speaks from different points of view. He is constantly shifting from the persona of the African addressing the French to that of the African writing to his African correspondent.

When addressing the European/the French/the Other, the narrator uses several relevant devices: he uses French 'keywords' referring to a supposedly well-known cultural background, explains African terms and borrows the point of view of the French speaker in order to show its irrelevance.

Showing an extensive knowledge of the history of France, the narrator very often refers to names, places, and events which have a deep significance in the history of Paris. Such references are sometimes very elaborate and therefore certainly address a very competent French reader:

"..les Normands préférèrent signer la paix, c'est à dire s'engager dans la barque pour 'toujours flotter sans jamais sombrer' "(158) ["the Normans preferred to sign the peace, in other words, board the boat, and 'continuously float without ever sinking'."]. This is a personal version of the motto of the city of Paris "Fluctuat nec mergitur". The foreign reader is also addressed in more simple terms; this is why words such as 'Benedicite' or 'Confiteor' are not explained; they belong to the cultural 'keywords' of the Parisian and the Frenchman. Colloquialisms such as 'barda' carry the same reference. Many such examples can be found in the text of Un Nègre à Paris that indicate the 'lieu d'énonciation' from which the narrator speaks. Among these, the use, and sometimes the explanation of, African terms also indicate the type of reader the writer has in mind. 'Marabouts' for example is a word which now belongs to the dictionary of French language, but other African names are explained in a footnote: "Je n'ai trouvé ici aucun nom-proverbe, tels que nous nous en donnons chez nous: Climbié, Katchidéba, Bégroubèhon, Bimzème, Motchian" translated in a footnote page 168 as meaning 'un jour','rappelle-toi d'avant', 'je suis invincible', 'on ne me connait pas', 'ce qui est cher' ["I have been unable to find here any proverb-name such as the ones we use at home: Climbié, Katchidéba, Bégroubèhon, Bimzème, Motchian" translated in a footnote page 168 as meaning respectively 'one day','remember the days past ', ' I am invincible ', 'I am not known', 'what is dear'."]

Another indicator showing the pre-awareness of a French audience is represented by what Austin J. Shelton calls the "conscious subjectivity" of the narrator, a conscious subjectivity he "use(s) to make the very point that this so-called 'objectivity' is simply European foolishness" (Shelton, 1970, 218). This, in the words of the narrator, becomes: " Certains(...) cherchent à nous connaitre(...) mais ramenant tout à leur mesure, à leur façon de voir, ils regardent la plupart du temps(nos oeuvres) avec les yeux qu'il ne faut pas"(203-204). In other words, the analysis of Africa according to the French point of view is irrelevant because it is subjective and ethnocentric. It is also marred by stereotypes and generalizations. The narrator of Un Nègre à Paris "describes the interesting customs and manners of his hosts" using these very stereotypes, generalizations and subjectivity. This "role switching" is, as Shelton writes, the "reverse role of many a rather smug European traveler to West Africa (who) ... would describe the quaint behaviour of Africans for home consumption so that others might 'understand' them". We could add that this description is done not only for home consumption, i.e. for the West African reader, but for

overseas consumption as well. That is, for the French readership. As Dadié himself declared about this and other reversal novels of his (such as Patron de New York, and La Ville où Nul ne Meurt), "toute cette chronique décrit l'Occident par rapport à notre culture Africaine". It is a description done with the African 'mesure' and 'façon de voir', but done on purpose in order to show the European that his own 'façon de voir' is not suitable for a good understanding of Africa.

This is why Dadié tells the European that "pour connaitre, apprécier, aimer un peuple, il faut apprécier son histoire..."(134). The narrator shows a good knowledge of Parisian history, but his interpretation of it is consciously subjective, a model of subjectivity which Tanhoé Bertin recommends his French readership to avoid, by showing how this leads to some irrelevancies. Not only should the European admit that Africans have a history of their own but it should not be judged by European standards.

Similarly, comparisons are not always helpful in an attempt to understand the other; this is shown in a passage where the narrator describes the fortune-tellers in Paris: "J'ai vu un de leurs marabouts ou diseurs de bonne aventure.... J'ai voulu le consulter. Cela n'a pas été possible parce que j'ignore ma date de naissance.... J'en conclus que nos génies sont plus forts que les leurs"(144-146) ["I have seen one of their marabouts or fortune-tellers.... I wanted to consult him but it was not possible because he said I had to know my date of birth..... I believe that our spirits are more efficient than theirs."] Despite its apparently naive aspect this comparison like the whole design of the book "turns the tables" on the French,

> describing them through the characters of the Parisians who are possibly no more representative of the French than are the Dakarois representative of the Senegalese... By drawing comparisons between the West African and the Parisian the author suggests that Africans are as good as Europeans, or that Europeans are as bad as Africans.(Shelton, 1970, 219)

In the text this is formulated by the narrator in the following terms:

> Je ne vois guère ce qui les sépare fondamentalement de nous. Je ne cherche que cela depuis mon arrivée dans ce pays. Je rencontre partout des hommes comme nous, bavards, timides, audacieux. Je les regarde manger, rire, converser, boire, discuter, courir, s'arrêter, rêver, s'aimer. Je comprends davantage la vanité des barrières sur lesquelles nombre de gens sont si à cheval.(149).
>
> ["Although I have been paying close attention to it since I arrived in this country, I do not see any fundamental difference between them and us. Everywhere I meet men who are like us: talkative, shy, audacious. The more I see them eat, laugh, discuss, drink, run, stop, dream, love, the more I understand the irrelevance of the cultural fences that people so vainly erect"]

Dadié makes it clear here that he has in mind several "gens," several implied readers, not only the European convinced of his own cultural superiority, but also the African who, in the words of A.J. Shelton, goes to the extreme of black racism or tends "to hyperglorify the African past to suggest an African cultural superiority" (Shelton, 1970, 222).

The African stands for the other implied reader of Un Nègre à Paris. The author addresses this reader and another real reader simultaneously, using again a particular 'lieu d'énonciation' which is different from the French-oriented one. He in turn uses certain "key-words' which refer to a well-known African reality, explains certain concepts which he thinks his reader is not familiar with, and also uses his reader's own stereotypes about Europe and the white man in general.

The overall approach is one in which the narrator addresses his African correspondent describing what is unfamiliar in terms of something more familiar. The fortune-tellers in Paris are compared with the West African 'marabouts' or 'génies', while the journalists are made to look like the familiar 'griots'.

On board the plane to Paris, Tanhoé Bertin says he is "le seul nègre parmi tant de voyageurs blancs"(22) ["the only black man in the midst of so many white passengers."] He is the African transplanted to Paris and who reports on the manners and customs of its inhabitants. This is why we find in the text such phrases expressing his amazement as: "comme il doit être curieusement fait le Parisien pour aimer à la fois le chien, l'eau, le vent, les herbes, les fleurs, les femmes, les enfants..."(47) ["the Parisian must be curiously made to be able to love at the same time dogs, water, the wind, grass, flowers, women, children, ..."].

The descriptions of the manners of the Parisians are fine pieces of prose which show again the narrative persona as in this passage about hand-kissing:

> L'homme instruit par des siècles de contact a pour la femme des égards... Elle est si délicate... que pour la saluer, les hommes prennent mille précautions. D'abord, ils joignent les pieds, tendent le cou, penchent légèrement le buste, lui saisissent la main qu'elle tend avec grâce et la portent à leurs lèvres. Cela s'appelle 'baiser la main'.(50).
> ["Polished by centuries of contact the male holds the woman in high esteem... She is so delicate... that in order to greet her, men take infinite precautions... To begin with, they join their feet, stretch their neck, bend slightly forward, gently holding the hand that she so gracefully offers and bring it to their lips. This is called 'kissing the hand'."]

Many such examples dealing with various aspects of French Parisian life colour the text; religious beliefs and superstitions, étiquette ... These examples however are presented in such a way as to appeal to the imagination of his African reader.

Another level of communication with the African reader can be found in the text of Un Nègre à Paris. As J.A. Mayes puts it the narrator, in the position of an outsider making subjective reporting as a participant within Paris (Rome or New York) life, addresses a wide audience. But when through the 'referential' technique of his chronicle he asks the reader to make inferences and deductions that go beyond the reality of the book itself, i.e. establish a "relationship ... between (the reader's) personal experience and those recounted in the chronicle," Dadié supposes a certain "literary and cultural competence" in his reader.(Mayes, 1977, 111-2)

The other African reader Dadié addresses is a competent reader, "an individual who is able to understand and comprehend, possesses the ability to reason by analogy and inference. Both inductive and deductive reasoning require knowledge of a particular experience before that experience can be related to a general or different one".(Mayes, 1977, 111) The African reader mentioned above is indeed a sophisticated one, who is 'au fait' with the subtleties of the French language, who is at ease with colloquialisms and is 'érudit' enough to refer to Paris's motto 'Fluctuat nec mergitur' for example. Dadié supposes a certain awareness in his audience. When he writes that there is "pas un seul chansonnier pour nous dire nos faits, brasser l'atmosphère de plomb qui est la nôtre, ramener les uns de leurs célestes demeures et sortir les autres de leur léthargie"(208) ["we have not a single cabaret singer to sing our deeds, to relieve that heavy atmosphere of ours, to bring some of us down from their heavenly mansions, and to shake some others awake from their lethargy."], it is the social awakener who speaks to his own countrymen, with an autobiographical touch. He therefore requires of his reader some basic knowledge of the realities in his country in order to understand the social and political criticism of the chronicle. Various aspects are treated by Dadié, among which are the role and the condition of women, the depersonalization of traditional society, religious beliefs and superstitions.

The attack is not a direct one however. It is suggested by an example. For instance, when he says that in the Parisian he sees "l'exemple d'un peuple décidé à rester lui-même... (qui) pour rien au monde n'accepterait de changer de visage, d'habitudes, de comportement"(127) ["the example of a people determined to retain its personality and who, under no circumstances would agree to change its face, its habits, or its behaviour"], he urges the

African to develop a similar pride in his own cultural identity and to preserve it.

Other African issues are also mentioned 'en passant'. Speaking of the common belief that Africa is the ideal tourist place for its sunny weather he comments :"Le soleil a beau luire, tant qu'il luit sur des misères, il ne réchauffe jamais les cœurs... Sous tous les cieux, les choses ne sont pas sans accrocs, et encore moins chez nous où le drapeau de la concussion claque au vent"(143) ["No matter how long the sun shines, as long as it shines on misery, it would never warn hearts... Under all skies, things are not without difficulty especially in our country where misappropriation is at its highest."]. Other comments have to be placed in the then contemporary context of Ivory Coast (1959-1961) with the approaching independence of the country which, "tout au long de son histoire... livre une lutte incessante pour être lui-même, régir ses destinées"(195) ["a country which, as its history shows, has been ceaselessly fighting in order to preserve its personality, to be master of its destiny."]. The competent reader has therefore to have a good knowledge of his own country's history and political issues. Furthermore, Dadié even asks for a more specialized knowledge. When for instance he attacks European cultural superiority and those extremes of black racism and of hyperglorification of an African culture and superiority. he seems to address the élite only. For A.J. Shelton, this cultural protest of Un Nègre à Paris has to be opposed to several extremes among which he mentions the almost polemical protest of O. Nzekwu and S. Ousmane, the romanticization of African cultures and persons as in N. Boni, W. Conton, C, Ekwensi, C.H. Kane and Nokan, and such 'Négritude' protest as that of L.S. Senghor, Aké Loba and Segun. From this same restricted public, he requires the use of a "referential power" and asks his reader to make "inferences and deductions that go beyond the reality of the book itself".(Mayes, 1977, 111)

L'AVENTURE AMBIGUE

L'Aventure Ambiguë is organised into two main parts: part one which is divided into nine chapters roughly revolves around the traditional environment of the main focal figure, Samba Diallo. Part two, as the exact replica of the first, presents within nine chapters the experience of Samba Diallo overseas. Chapter ten, which critics agree to as a separate epilogue, stands as a detached unit and emphasises the unsuccessful attempt of the narrator to reach a synthesis between the two worlds.

There are in fact two focal figures in the novel: Samba Diallo and another person simply known among the Diallobé as 'the madman'. The latter

remains in the background without being mentioned and emerges only when the times are out of joint, that is when another important character, Thierno, the religious teacher and spiritual guide of the Diallobé is dying, in other words the traditional spiritual order is under threat. The first part of the novel is centered around Samba Diallo, second son of the Knight, cousin of the Chief, and nephew of an influential woman, his aunt The Most Royal Lady. Like all the children of his age, he is sent to the traditional classes in the Glowing Hearth of Maître Thierno, with the secret hope among his relatives that he would become the successor of either the Chief or of Thierno. His religious education is however interrupted at the instigation of the Most Royal Lady. Foreseeing that the secret for survival lies within the teaching of the newly-installed colonial school, she decides to put him in the whites' school. When Samba completes the programme, he is again, at the instigation of his aunt, sent overseas for further studies, where she thinks he can discover the white man's secret, "comment vaincre sans avoir raison".

During his stay in Paris Samba is struck by the accuracy of the madman's warning. The latter's contact with the West had made him feel a deep incompatibility, a premonition that the two worlds are not to be reconciled. And in this respect an analysis of the madman's account of his first contact with Paris indicates how deeply this incompatibility is perceived. Beyond the symbolical terms of the narration, we understand that the newly-arrived feels sick, and his body revolts because the surrounding objects and persons are cold, impersonal, and empty. This conflict felt by the madman can be seen in his own diagnosis: "Ce que j'éprouvais était plus profond qu'une simple sédition de mon corps. Ce tremblement... me parut l'écho fraternel de mon corps à un désarroi plus intime...." (L'Aventure,102-4). ["What I felt went deeper than the mere revolt of my body. This trembling ... seemed to me to be an inward disturbance..."(Woods,90-2)]

This prophetic statement in which the madman sees that "de nouveau le chaos obscène est dans le monde et nous défie"(L'Aventure,105), is translated, years later, by Samba Diallo in Paris when he tells Lucienne that "ce décor c'est du faux. Derrière il y a mille fois plus beau, mille fois plus vrai! Mais je ne retrouve plus le chemin de ce monde'(L'Aventure,157).["There is obscene chaos in the world once more, and it defies us"(Woods, 93) and "that scene is a sham! Behind it, there is something a thousand times more beautiful, a thousand times more true!"(Woods, 144)]

Samba Diallo's stay in Paris is very quick. Even before he completes his studies, he is called back by his father the Knight, who wants him to return to his rank and place among the Diallobé. But the end has begun with the death of Thierno, with the coming of the white school, and Samba is therefore unable to reconcile the two worlds. Caught between two hybrid upbringings - the traditional one which he did finish and the foreign one which was interrupted before its completion - he is a hybrid unable to identify with either of the two worlds. And when he is asked by the madman to pray it suddenly becomes clear to him how deep the split in his personality is, how far he has become a hybrid. Unable to fulfil his mission, the been-to is subject to such feelings as treason, guilt, 'mauvaise conscience', and he sinks into doubt. For the madman, Samba Diallo now represents a threat to the traditional order. In his eyes he has changed camp. When he refers to his attempt to stop the "jaillissement" what he has in mind is to stop the invasion of the Diallobé world by the destructive values of the West. It is in this perspective that his killing Samba Diallo has to be understood.

L'Aventure Ambiguë has been analysed and perceived as the expression of a debate the issues of which were "l'école coranique ou l'école occidentale," "le passage de l'ancien au nouveau" or again "African spiritualism versus Western materialism"1. This is the opinion of Vincent Monteil who, in a preface to the 1961 edition of L'Aventure Ambiguë writes that "le nœud du problème, c'est, bien entendu, le problème scolaire"(10). In his preface, Vincent Monteil also draws a significant parallel between Cheikh Hamidou Kane and Saint Françis of Assisi which reveals the true nature of the readership expected by the 'préfacier' if not by the novelist:

> Dans la famille de Cheikh Kane, on l'appelle 'Samba' qui est le nom de rang du deuxième fils. Et quand, enfant on voulait lui faire sentir quelque réprobation pour une incartade, on le traitait de mbare (qui est un sobriquet d'esclave). De même, le héros de L'Aventure Ambiguë nomme mbare ce que François d'Assise appelait 'mon frère l'âne'(8).
> [In Cheikh Kane's family, he is called 'Samba' which is the rank name of the second son. And when as a child someone wanted to show him some reprobation after a freak, he was called mbare (which is a slave's nickname). Likewise, the hero of Ambigous Adventure calls mbare what Saint Francis of Assisi called 'mon frère l'âne.']

This comparison not only assumes a certain competence on the part of the European reader with regard to his own literary tradition but also explains an African concept by the use of European references and images. Moreover the association of 'cheikh' with 'esclave', of Samba with mbare, points to another important characteristic of the novel, for, as is indicated by

Hassan El Nouty, there is a hieratic presentation of characters and it is a

> stylisation physique et morale (qui) apparait comme la clé d'un certain réseau de significations qui débordent l'anecdote particulière ou individuelle. Les portraits des Diallobé consistent en quelques grands traits qui évoquent des idées de noblesse moyennageuse et de théocratie" (El Nouty, 1974, 478-9).

This physical and moral stylisation can be followed through the portrait of Samba Diallo for instance. Although he is dressed in rags and is sent, during his Koranic formation, with other disciples of the teacher, to beg for their daily food, the description makes it clear that not all the pupils are on an equal footing. In a similar vein, the plebeian Demba, "ce fils de paysan," refers to him in the following way: "votre prince ne l'est pas seulement de sang... Il est aussi prince de l'esprit"(L'Aventure, 31) ["your prince is not only a prince of the blood.. He is also a prince of the mind and spirit" (Woods, 18)]. The noble outlook of the latter is also reflected in a similar presentation of The Most Royal Lady whose face "était comme une page vivante de l'histoire des Diallobé. Tout ce que le pays compte de tradition épique s'y lisait"(L'Aventure, 31)[" a living page of the history of the Diallobé. Everything the country treasured of epic tradition could be read there"(Woods, 20)]. She in turn gives a portrait of Thierno, the religious teacher, which reinforces the latter's spiritual power. As she says,

> mon frère (le chef) est le cœur vivant de ce pays mais vous en êtes la conscience. Enveloppez-vous d'ombre, retirez-vous dans votre foyer et nul, je l'affirme, ne pourra donner le bonheur aux Diallobé. Votre maison est la plus démunie de tout le pays, votre corps le plus décharné, mais nul n'a, sur ce pays, un empire qui égale le vôtre. (L'Aventure, 45)
> ["My brother is the living heart of this country, but you are its conscience. Envelop yourself in shadow, retire in your own hearth, and nothing, I declare to you, will bring good fortune to the Diallobé. Your house is the most scantily furnished in the countryside, your body the most emaciated, your appearance the most fragile. But no one has a sovereign authority over this country which equals yours"(Woods, 35)]

The parallel with the European medieval world is clear enough to allow a foreign reader to feel at ease in the narration; Thierno can be easily identified with a familiar priest-like figure. This hieratic symbolism has also struck Vincent Monteil and if he presents the book in a conveniently comparative view, drawing on the similarities between a European and an African social vision, his attitude also reflects that of Cheikh Hamidou Kane.

Kane seems to use a typical Middle Ages imagery through which he describes the differences between classes among the Diallobé people; but along with an expression of class consciousness, he provides the foreign reader with a stereotyped view of Islam which, far from relating to a genuine Islam, uses, as Bob Sherrington shows, "literary images [of Islam] (which) relate primarily to a debate whose terms are defined by Europe, and which does not centrally concern Islam at all" (SHERRINGTON, 1980, 19). This preoccupation of the novelist with helping his foreign reader gain an insight into an African environment can be substantiated with several examples from the text. For instance, the characters of L'Aventure Ambiguë are presented in a series of binary oppositions which can be sketched as follows. The royal family, represented by the Most Royal Lady as a symbol of authority, is opposed, in chapter four for instance, to the anonymous mass of the Diallobé. This mass is addressed by the Most Royal Lady in terms of the opposition "moi La Grande Royale/ vous, gens des Diallobé". From this anonymous crowd emerge nameless individuals referred to, for example, as "le maître des forgerons," or other figures representing the different crafts guilds. The Most Royal Lady when comparing Samba to Demba speaks of the latter as "ce fils de paysan, patient et obstiné"(L'Aventure, 27), "un manant"(32) who is later to succeed to Thierno and bring some revolutionary changes to the traditional Koranic school.

While using a stereotyped presentation of Islam and a "religious interpretation" the author appears to avoid the discussion of questions relating to the nature of colonization. And in so doing he can be seen to conform to the expectations of the French readership of the independence period in the early sixties, although there is evidence that the work was written earlier (which might explain the political caution).

Islam, as it is presented in this novel, shows no African specificity. It is set within the more general dichotomy of an exclusive either/or choice between an African spiritualism on the one hand and a European materialism on the other. The nature of this spiritualism, as it is indicated in the novel, can be best examined in the way the religious teacher-guide of the Diallobé is portrayed:

> Le maître était un homme redoutable à beaucoup d'égards. Deux occupations remplissaient sa vie: les travaux de l'esprit et les travaux des champs. Il consacrait aux travaux des champs le strict minimum de son temps... Le reste de son temps, il le consacrait à l'étude, à la méditation, à la prière et à la formation des jeunes gens confiés à ses soins. Il s'acquittait de cette tâche avec une passion réputée dans tout le pays des Diallobé. Des maîtres venant des contrées les plus lointaines

> le visitaient périodiquement et repartaient édifiés" (L'Aventure, 17-18).
> ["The teacher from several points of view was a formidable man. Two occupations filled his life: the work of the spirit and the work of the field. To the work of the field he devoted the strict minimum of his time... The rest of his days and nights he consecrated to study, to meditation, to prayer, and to the education and molding of the young people who had been confided to his care. He acquitted himself of this task with a passion which was renowned through all the country of the Diallobé. Teachers from the most distant regions would come periodically to visit him and would go away edified" (Woods, 7-8)].

As can be seen in this passage the description applies to any religious person, any monk or priest for whom spirituality and the future redemption of the soul are more important than material things. This is not the exclusive portrait of a typical Muslim figure. But Thierno is not only described as a religious teacher but he is shown to belong to the ruling group as well, he holding the spiritual power, and the Most Royal Lady and her brother the Chief, the political. As such he promotes, in the name of Islamic values, a conservative ideology which not only serves the needs of the élite in power, but also does not question the 'fait colonial'. His conservatism can be read behind his hesitation and inability to decide for his followers, as to which school is best for the Diallobé:

> Il est certain que leur école apprend mieux à lier le bois au bois et que les hommes doivent se construire des demeures qui résistent au temps... Il faut construire des demeures solides pour les hommes et il faut sauver Dieu à l'intérieur de ces demeures. Cela je le sais. Mais ne me demandez pas ce qu'il faut faire demain car cela je ne sais pas. (L'Aventure, 21-22).
> ["It is certain that their school is the better teacher of how to join wood to wood, and that men should learn how to construct dwelling houses that resist the weather.... We must build solid dwellings for men, and within those dwellings we must save God. That I know. But do not ask me what should be done tomorrow morning, for that I do not know" (Woods, 11)]

The conflict mentioned here, that of religious and secular teaching, is not specific to Islam. If the Diallobé have the feeling they represent the defenders of faith, if they feel this "nécessité de repenser les rapports entre le spirituel et le temporel," says Hassan El Nouty, "le même problème s'était posé à l'Europe au sortir du Moyen-Age... Il ne s'agit pas d'un problème propre aux Diallobé, ni des Diallobé en tant que peuple Africain, noir ou Peulh" (El Nouty, 1974, 476). The colonial theme is therefore diverted into a conflict between two civilizations, two faiths, with the implicit hope that a synthesis will be achieved in the future. It is precisely because of this neutrality that L'Aventure Ambiguë has enjoyed a

wide reception among the French reading public[2]. This is why I think that Hassan El Nouty's criticism is justified when he maintains that "la sève qui y circule est réactionnaire"(El Nouty, 1974, 487). This reactionary attitude of Kane is carefully explained by Nouréini Tidjani-Serpos when he writes:

> L'Aventure Ambiguë n'est que la longue histoire d'un malaise général dont les causes économiques et politiques sont voilées sur le plan des idées par un interminable discours sur le spiritualisme africain et le matérialisme occidental... (a discourse emanating from and reflecting the preoccupations of conservative figures such as the teacher, the chief, the Most Royal Lady)... Ces derniers ne peuvent pas être cités comme menant une lutte contre l'impérialisme, loin de là. Encore une fois, ils ne mettent pas en cause le régime colonial dont ils sont les plus solides piliers.(Tidjani-Serpos, 1977, 202).
> [Ambiguous Adventure is only the long story of a general malaise, the economic and political causes of which are veiled by a lengthy discourse on African spiritualism and Western materialism...(a discourse emanating from and reflecting the preoccupations of conservative figures such as the teacher, the chief, the Most Royal Lady)... The latter cannot be quoted as fighting against imperialism. Once again, they do not question the colonial regime of which they are the most solid pillars.]

The nature of this neutral discourse or rather the absence of discourse on colonization falls within what, for Bob Sherrington, is a historical phase in the evolution of the African novel which was characterized by "the construction of a decolonization psychology in France and among the French educated minority of Africans"(Sherrington, 1980, 20). L'Aventure Ambiguë among other novels is shown to abide by the rules set by "the sponsors of African writing (who) endorsed only those books that echoed the colonial ideology, expressed the author's allegiance to French colonialism and could be used as propaganda material, symbols of French intellectual successes"(Dramé, 1985, 282).

Although the preceding remarks convey an almost polemical note, it is not our desire to evaluate the nature of Kane's commitment to the decolonization of Africa as it appears in his novel[2]. Our point was mainly to show the author's conforming to the expectations of a given foreign readership, and in so doing, determine both its nature and the novelist's view of it.

Because L'Aventure Ambiguë is the only book to date written by the Senegalese Cheikh Hamidou Kane it is not possible to assess any evolution in his writing by comparing it to others of his works. Therefore, rather than restricting our approach to L'Aventure Ambiguë as a mere text analysis for itself, we believe that it is more rewarding to examine Cheikh Hamidou Kane's novel in the light of comparisons with other African novels, namely Africa Answers Back by H.R.H. Akiki K. Nyabongo and Un Nègre à Paris by

Bernard Dadié.

L'Aventure Ambiguë and Africa Answers Back are similar and different at the same time. Our discussion of this comparison is set against what seems to be very different societies. With L'Aventure Ambiguë, Kane expresses the point of view of a West African francophone intellectual, who comes from a country which has resisted Christianity and has remained Muslim despite the efforts of the colonizer. On the contrary, Nyabongo writes about an anglophone East African state - Uganda - which has offered less resistance to conversion and accepted the foreign religion. Despite what appears to be a distinctive background, the two novels have much in common. Their similarities lie in the fact that both of them deal with the theme of the encounter of traditional societies with the West. They also have a similar characterisation, and present types rather than individualized characters. It is perhaps the behaviour of these characters and the outcome of this encounter which constitute their differences.

The comparison between L'Aventure Ambiguë and Africa Answers Back will show how the novels are both similar and different. From the point of view of the structure, they are similar because both of them are *Bildungsromans* or novels of education with a plot that follows the education of the hero through his contact with Western culture. Moreover, both novelists insist on the exceptional character of the heroes. Samba Diallo and Mujungu are both of royal or noble origin. Their families and the others see in them their future leaders and make them feel and behave accordingly. They therefore act as representatives of their own people who are sent out on an exploratory mission the outcome of which will determine the future and survival of their kinsmen. They are told that they have to learn of the white man's ways and discover his secret. In the process both the heroes and their societies undergo a certain metamorphosis. But the reactions of Samba Diallo and Mujungu are not identical.

Their main difference therefore resides in their ability/inability to decide vital changes and make the right decisions. Mujungu is shown as being able to amalgamate the good aspects of his education and also to reject what he thinks is not suitable. He proves to be a clear-minded, practical, and machiavellian leader whereas Samba Diallo remains confused, theoretical and unable to make any decision or to assume the function of leadership.

In the final instance both Samba Diallo and Mujungu appear to be outsiders. The former is an outsider because of his inability to adapt to unforeseen circumstances. Moreover, he is considered a traitor and is an

outsider because of some kind of 'mauvaise conscience': he has disappointed the whole royal family by not responding to their demands and expectations whereas the latter takes things in control and caters for the needs of his kinsmen.

NO LONGER AT EASE

An identical preoccupation characterises the novels of Chinua Achebe. For the purposes of this approach the choice has deliberately focused on his second novel, No Longer At Ease, which is the most relevant to our theme. A reading of Achebe's works leads one to realize that No Longer At Ease cannot be dissociated from Things Fall Apart (1958) or from Achebe's subsequent novels: Arrow Of God, A Man Of The People and more recently The Trouble With Nigeria (1980) and Anthills of the Savannah (1987), not to mention the collections of short stories and essays the novelist has produced. This how Okafor explains the link between Things Fall Apart and No Longer At Ease: "The fact that according to the biographical data added to the latest edition of Things Fall Apart, No Longer At Ease was 'originally planned as part of Things Fall Apart ' reinforces the chronological unity of the narrative"(Okafor, 1972, 221-222)

While concentrating on No Longer At Ease however, it is necessary to refer to Achebe's other novels in specific cases. For instance, it is not possible to understand the psychology of Isaac Okonkwo in No Longer At Ease without referring to his childhood as it is described in Things Fall Apart. The same is true for Obi who has a literary double in the person of Ogbuefi Okonkwo the central figure of Things Fall Apart. This is why, in a first phase, the focal figure of No Longer At Ease, Obi Okonkwo, will be presented against that of his grandfather. Both characters will be shown to undergo similar phases such as their rise to fame, their subsequent exile/departure, followed by a return which leads to failure. In the description of their fall the main difference between Obi and Okonkwo seems to come from their varying degrees of awareness. While the former is constantly in full control of his acts, the latter is less decided, and often lets events decide for themselves. Obi's inability to decide will prove to have its roots in the hybrid upbringing he was submitted to, not unlike Samba Diallo in L'Aventure Ambiguë.

A reading of both Things Fall Apart and No Longer at Ease thus reveals the extent to which the latter is a sequel to the former. A presentation of No Longer at Ease therefore has to take into account the fact that the marginalisation of the focal figure, Obi Okonkwo, is the outcome of a process of alienation which is described in Things Fall Apart. It is for

this reason that our approach to No Longer At Ease necessarily has to be comparative. Furthermore another striking feature is the complementarity which binds the two novels together.

On reading both novels, we are led to notice that the narrative of No Longer At Ease approximately starts where Things Fall Apart stopped. The action of the second novel takes place two generations after the first European contact with Africa, and this is illustrated by the link between the focal figures of the two novels: Obi Okonkwo is the son of Isaac Okonkwo (called Nwoye in Things Fall Apart before he joins the Christian Mission School), and the grandson of the old Ogbuefi Okonkwo. He is described as being the brightest boy in the village of Iguedo. After a brilliant passage in the CMS Central School in Umuofia, he wins a scholarship to one of the best secondary schools in the area - whereas his friend Joseph, who was less fortunate, and whose parents could not afford school fees, was temporarily compelled to join the army to make a living and later to join the Civil Service in Lagos. With the sponsorship of the Umuofia Progressive Union (a union of the sons of Umuofia 'abroad', i.e. in Lagos) who collects money, he is sent to England to study law so that when he returns he will be able to help his countrymen in their land disputes with their neighbours and also have a European post in the Civil Service in the city. Once in England he changes his subject of study and reads English instead without consulting his sponsoring body. He eventually returns home four years later and works with the Government Scholarship Board with Mr Green as his immediate superior. The return therefore seems to be successful. Obi is given two royal welcomes: one in Lagos by the Umuofia Progressive Union, and another one in Iguedo by his village people and family who see in him their "only palm-fruit," their prodigal son returned. Along with his well paid job he gets a brand new car and a luxury flat in the European area of Lagos. Despite the previous signs however the return proves to be a disappointment for Obi keeps accumulating mistakes, a fact which indicates not only his non-conformity but also his alienation. Whereas Joseph and Christopher, another been-to, try to dissuade him from marrying Clara, an outcast girl who studied nursing in England and whom he met in London and again on the boat, Obi disregards both their advice and the traditions until he comes into conflict with both the Umuofia Progressive Union and his old parents. Cut off from the traditions and only superficially westernized, he develops a strong self-will and a strong "pride [which] leads [him] to disregard the well-meaning advice of the group" (Okafor, 1972, 222). As he gradually gets into financial difficulties he is led to accept several bribes until he is caught red-handed with a wad of marked banknotes. The novel ends as it began

with the scene of the court meeting for Obi's trial. As the narrator underlines,

> Everybody wondered why. The learned judge, as we have seen, could not comprehend how an educated young man and so on and so forth. The British Council man, and even the men of Umuofia, did not know. And we must presume that, in spite of his certitude, Mr Green did not know either. (No Longer, 170).

While comparing the last part of chapter nineteen in No Longer At Ease with the last part of the last chapter in Things Fall Apart, we notice that the ending of the novel is marked by an equally unexpected happening: Ogbuefi Okonkwo commits suicide and, as implied by his friend Obierika, nobody could understand why. As he tells the District Commissioner, "that man was one of the greatest men in Umuofia, and you drove him to kill himself; and now he will be buried like a dog..."(Things, 187). In a similar manner, nobody in Lagos understands how the downfall of such a promising young man as Obi Okonkwo had been made possible.

In addition to the various similarities that exist between the two novels we can see that their structure is also similar. As has been underlined earlier, both narratives follow the cycle of departure, initiation, and return. In the case of Okonkwo and Obi, this can be analyzed along three main guidelines: their respective rise to fame before their departure, the period spent in exile (or overseas in the case of Obi) and its influence on their return, and finally the nature and outcome of the return itself.

The story of Obi Okonkwo as developed here in No Longer At Ease is meant to say among other things that the future of the group is dependent on the success and the faithfulness of the emissary. With Peter Abrahams' A Wreath for Udomo the network of dependency is larger. The duties of the hero, Michael Udomo, are not to his village but to the nation and even to Africa as a whole. While he is in England he develops a sentimental link with Africa and declares that his personal freedom will not be achieved unless the African continent itself is freed from the shackles of colonialism.

A WREATH FOR UDOMO

Among Abrahams' eight novels three stand as penetrating studies of the facts of power, race and culture, to use the expression of Kolawole Ogungbesan. For this critic,

> Abrahams' theme is the attempt of black men to regain their manhood and self-respect, which can help them to achieve true freedom in a world dominated by white men. Abrahams believes that until this is done, it will not be possible for the blacks to mix with the whites on a personal level and with easy relaxation. How this is to be done

> is the subject of these three novels, using three different political situations - colonialism in A Wreath for Udomo, the colour bar in A Night, and neo-colonialism in This Island now. (Ogungbesan, 1972, 419).

We are not interested here in these novels in the more specific theme of apartheid as it emerges in South African literature. Our aim is rather to concentrate on a novel the subject matter of which would be more 'Pan-African' - so to speak - and therefore would allow comparison with novels from other parts of Africa. At the same time, the other criterion to be met by the novel is that it should have as its focus the education of a focal figure who goes overseas and returns, and who eventually ends up, because of his specific background, as an outsider in his own country.

A Wreath for Udomo seems to fit within this framework. By concentrating on the period of independence and post-independence, it provides interesting similarities with other novels such as A Man of the People by Chinua Achebe, as both of them constitute fictionalized versions of reality and also specific attitudes to the tribal question. With The African by William Conton it shares the examination of the mechanisms whereby an intellectual rises to power in his country and brings independence but is later confronted, like Samba Diallo in L'Aventure Ambiguë, by the unresolved conflict between African tradition and Western modernism. By putting the stress on the role of the artist in the context of a changing African country, A Wreath for Udomo also resembles some of Armah's novels. Despite these resemblances, one should note however that there is a major difference between Peter Abrahams and the other African writers: the latter write about their own societies whereas the former is an observer of someone else's. The Ghana in A Wreath for Udomo is very different from Armah's Ghana. William Conton also is to some extent distanced from the subject-matter as he is a Sierra Leonean writing about Ghana. The literary device of the outsider looking at someone else's country is not unique to Abrahams; the same situation is to be found with Driss Chraibi and Michel Tournier, as outsiders looking at the Algeria that Boudjedra and Mouloud Feraoun describe from inside.

A Wreath for Udomo is the story of one main focal figure, Michael Udomo, who is studying in Canada after a stay in Europe. The narration focuses on him as he arrives in London and wants to meet the so-called father of the African revolution in exile, Tom Lanwood. Udomo's itinerary is somewhat typical of that of the heroes of the *Bildungsromans*. To Udomo, Tom Lanwood has always represented the model, but as he comes to know him closer, he gradually realises that his "political God" is now an ineffectual ageing theoretician who is totally out of touch with the African reality, because

he has been away so long.

Lois, a quadragenarian school-teacher he meets in a pub introduces him to the group of African exiles in London: Tom Lanwood, whom she has known for fifteen years, Richard Adebhoy, a doctor, and David Mhendi, from Pluralia, who was, as we later learn, at the origin of the unsuccessful Pluralian uprising a few years earlier. Later, he meets Paul Mabi, an artist from Panafrica, but the latter seems to play the more specific role of the lonely artist figure which will be developed later in this study. Lois, who has become Udomo's lover, agrees to use her flat as the headquarters of the group. It is there that their propaganda sheet, *The Liberator*, is typed to be printed and sent to Panafrica when Adebhoy goes there as an emissary to prepare the ground for Udomo's coming. The first part of the novel therefore presents a group that is united, especially during the debates on colonial questions with the increasingly influential Progressive Party. However, as Lois later discovers that Udomo has been unfaithful to her with her flatmate Jo Furse, she throws him out and the split in the group widens.

This split has already started with the arrival of Udomo. Before his coming, it was Tom Lanwood who acted as the unifying force behind the group of African intellectuals in exile. After his speech during the Progressive Party's debate, Udomo emerges as the leading figure of the group. In the eyes of Lois, who sums up the opinion of the group revolving around Udomo, he was the core of the group. His exceptional energy and dedication has given the exhausted exiles a new "raison d'être". They now had real plans for the independence of Panafrica and even a propaganda sheet called *The Liberator*. As a first move towards returning to their homeland, Adebhoy is sent by Udomo to Panafrica to undertake preparatory negotiations with the merchants, and the group of chiefs and elders. When Udomo later sails to Panafrica, he is given an exceptional welcome and a well organised public-relations campaign promotes him to the role of the predestined leader. While editing the *Queenstown Post*, a newspaper financed and controlled by three conservative merchants, Udomo prints one last edition in which a call for a general strike is launched. As he is subsequently imprisoned by the colonial security services, Selina and Adebhoy devote their energy to underground work - clandestine circulation of the paper in secret reading circles, and fund-raising for the new Africa Freedom Party. As the strike goes on, Udomo emerges as the dominant political partner in the subsequent negotiations and is called by the Governor to form a government after the elections.

Though everything goes as planned - Lanwood and Mabi are back, whereas Mhendi has returned to Pluralia - the evolution of key-characters such as Udomo, Lanwood, Mhendi and Mabi indicates that the return is not as successful as it could have been. Lanwood, mainly because, as we have seen, he has grown to be an outsider who is no longer in touch with the realities of Africa; Mabi, because by being an artist, he is more preoccupied with the moral values and their preservation; and ultimately Udomo who is killed by Selina's men in an attempt to restore tribal laws, an attempt that is somewhat similar to the madman's gesture in Kane's L'Aventure Ambiguë.

In highlighting the evolution of the individual characters from their rise to success to a brutal downfall, our point is to show how, through the pattern of a promising departure and unheroic return, emerges the archetype of the outsider. The various outsiders depicted in Abrahams are types that are to be encountered in other African novels such as for example Armah's The Beautyful Ones, Achebe's A Man of the People, Mphahlele's The Wanderers, and also Conton's The African, the latter occupying a special place in this analysis.

Like Abrahams "Conton is one of the [African] writers who have tried to recreate the events of transition by an African country from colonial rule to independence" (Gakwandi, 1977, 54). The hero of The African, Kisimi Kamara, travels to England for further education on a government grant. Like Udomo who shows an early interest in political issues - he had led that unsuccessful strike of francophone students - Kisimi also discovers a precocious awareness of political matters as shown in his perception of tribal divisions for example. Like Udomo he feels the vocation of an organiser. As he says on his way to England, "I feel sure that if all the African students in the United Kingdom now could come together as students to think and act together, we could all have self-government in ten years."(The African,41) Both of them are aware of their exceptional stature and destiny and they realise that their mission and debt are towards their respective countries:

> Samuel and I had both been aware of a mounting interest, during the last year together in Newcastle, in political developments back at home. We read avidly every word of the local papers which we had sent out to us, and often discussed far into the night what we considered to be the unsatisfactory progress being made by our political leaders in winning independence for Songhai, and what could be done to hasten matters up. [...] On our last night together, we pledged ourselves to work together as soon as possible after Samuel's return 'to free our beloved country from the shackles of imperialism and lead it into self-government'.(The African, 98-9)

Both Udomo and Kisimi Kamara entertain an idealised relationship with a mythical mother Africa. Udomo sees himself as the instrument of his country's liberation, eventually leading to the liberation of the entire African continent, including a special interest in South Africa. Likewise, Kisimi is determined

> to devote all my energies to politics, so that first in Songhai and then later, I hoped, throughout Africa, I could help free men from domination by people of other races. [...] I would seek to give every black child within my reach the chance to prove himself, in favourable circumstances, no whit inferior to his counterparts of different pigmentation. (The African, 108-9).

As they both return to Africa on successful completion of their studies, their respective ascent to Premiership is organised along the same lines. Both of them are the instruments of well orchestrated public-relations campaigns. Adebhoy, on Udomo's arrival, quickly brings him into contact with members of the local progressive intelligentsia who are later to form the nucleus of the Africa Freedom Party:

> These are the people I've invited to meet you. They're all young and educated and disillusioned with the leadership of the council. They could be the nucleus. [...]
> There'll be a dozen tonight. They're the best. But there are more. They've come to see you. To see if all I told them about you is true. They'll talk about you to others and so you'll get to be known. (Udomo, 134).

Similarly, one of the priorities of Kisimi's campaign is "to get to know and to be known by the people that mattered in as many different parts of Songhai as possible."(The African,113). After the *Daily News* publishes a photograph of him embracing the returning Samuel, and mentioning the rumour - the journalist had received a small bribe - that the two friends were planning to found a new political party aiming at "Unity now, self-government in five years,"

> eight young men, five of them from the North and the others from Sagresa and the coast, came to see us during the course of the following week at my bungalow in Lokko, to enquire about the 'new party'. [...] These early adherents, reacting immediately and with so little prompting to a call which at that time must have seemed so remote from reality - these were our true fellow-spirits. (The African, 112-3).

The ten disciples, as Kisimi calls the members of the founding group, are similar to Udomo's "shareholders in this great dream".

In these campaigns we notice that, in each case, much help comes from a newspaper sympathetic to his own views. Udomo turns the *Queenstown Post* into a propaganda sheet, and so does Kisimi with the *Daily News*. The *Daily News* of The African had been won with "A word in the ear and a pound in the

palm"(The African, 111). As the same photograph of Kisimi and Samuel appears again later in the paper - at Samuel's prompting this time, both friends understand the political value of spreading reports of this kind. As Samuel remarks, "This dear old rag could hardly be more helpful to us even if we held all the shares in it. (The African, 117). The *Daily News* once again gives the party extensive coverage as Samuel and Fatmata, Kisimi's wife, are arrested and then jailed - the former for illegally keeping a diamond which he meant as a symbol of the emerging party, the latter for subsequently assaulting a policeman as he was arresting Samuel - thus giving the party its first two 'martyrs'.

The *Queenstown Post* plays a similar role in the career of Udomo. Though he is the editor, he is severely controlled by the three merchants-owners who restrict his freedom of expression. But as the paper's readership is ripe enough and growing impatient, Udomo secretly prints a call for a general strike in the last issue of the paper. While part of it is seized and Udomo jailed, the remainder of the now illegal copies of the paper circulate nationwide through an underground network, from reading circle to reading circle, thus swelling the numbers of the new party's adherents. By keeping Udomo in prison, the colonial authorities unsuspectingly give Udomo extensive publicity, thus transforming him into a martyr as well. As Adebhoy tells the newly-arrived Lanwood and Mhendi,

> All that we did on the day he was arrested. That night we launched the party. Next morning we printed the leaflet about him weeping. That really stirred the people. You know all about the trial. It was then that reporters from all over the world started flocking in. It was the speech he made at the trial calling for a general strike that stopped everything and really finished them. No one went to work next day. (Udomo, 198).

Although Udomo has won by using less peaceful means than Kisimi, both of them during their Premiership deal with cooperative colonials. Though Adebhoy declares that "People who can't work with the Africans are not wanted here" (200), the reality is that the technical skills of the Europeans are still needed despite political autonomy. Replying to Lanwood's intransigent Africanisation slogans Udomo says: "We face problems there. [...] We have to have the men to replace these Englishmen. Running departments isn't the same as making speeches..."(Udomo, 200). To the local District Commissioner who has invited him for a drink and who inquires as to the nature of his future relationship with Europeans in Songhai, Kisimi also replies:

> We shall need the help of people like yourself for a very long time, whatever happens - or at least those with technical jobs. And those with whose help we feel we can dispense, or

> who choose to leave us voluntarily, we shall make sure are suitably compensated. (The African, 152)

The comparison between these two novels - A Wreath for Udomo and The African - highlights one of the major characteristics of Abrahams' novel. It is that there is a major difference between Abrahams and the other writers in that they are writing of their societies. The Ghana in A Wreath for Udomo is very different from Armah's Ghana. Conton also is to some extent distanced from the subject-matter as he is a Sierra Leonean writing about Ghana.

With Armah, Abrahams however shares one specific attitude: it is the mythologizing view of Africa. Both novelists have an idealised view of the country they describe at the risk of losing contact with the reality. In this sentimental view of the continent, Africa is imagined as being tribeless and in so doing Abrahams' hero, Michael Udomo, neglects an important element that is to precipitate his downfall. As for Armah, although his heroes live contemporary problems with which they cannot cope, they constantly have in mind a return to a more perfect, a mythical past. It is a tendency that can be felt in the more recent novels of Ayi Kwei Armah.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE MIDDLE PASSAGE

FRAGMENTS.

In this analysis, it has deliberately been decided to devote the major part of this presentation to the first novel, The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born mainly because of the belief that in this novel are announced the major themes that Armah is later to develop in his subsequent novels. Therefore, if the presentation of The Beautyful Ones is lengthy, it is justified in so far as it deals with themes and techniques that are to be found again in both Fragments and Why Are We So Blest?.

Among the five novels written by Ayi Kwei Armah, the first three have been chosen for comparative analysis because they constitute a group within Armah's oeuvre, with a recognizable similarity of themes and techniques. The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born, Fragments, and Why Are We So Blest? display an inward-looking structure which suits the heroes' and focal figures' exposition of their metaphysical and existential problems. In these novels the heroes or the 'been-to's described fall within the two categories devised by Armah: the authentic ones are liminal, that is they live on the threshold of both traditional and modern societies and are therefore unable to feel at home in either of them. These are opposed to what I will call simply the 'atypical' ones (the nature of that 'atypicality' to be explored later), the ones represented by the Koomsons of the The Beautyful Ones, the Brempongs and Asante-Smiths of Fragments. This binary division highlights the existence of a confrontational structure which is illustrated by the use of a set of symbols (cycles, rituals, ceremonies). These, combined with a constant reference to a "putrescent vision," an imagery insisting on decay, putrefaction and death in turn not only show the protagonists' defencelessness and their awareness of their ineffectiveness, but it also explains the recurrence of mad and disordered characters. The latter are often nameless and shown to hesitate between isolation and contact while developing a blindness-related imagery thus making them oscillate between blindness and sight.

In this respect I share the view of Simon Gikandi in his grouping of Armah's novels and his comments prove to be extremely relevant to our present distinction. For him,

> the most interesting contrast between the early and later Armah has to do with the characters' relationship with their society or community. While Two Thousand Seasons and The Healers are narratives built around the striving for unity by a whole group of people, the novels we are going to discuss

> (i.e. The Beautyful Ones, Fragments, and Why Are We So Blest?) trace the plight of one or two characters in a community that contradicts or spites the values they represent. (Gikandi, 1987, 73)

The argument developed by Simon Gikandi follows his classification of Armahs's novels (among other African novels) into two of several categories. To him, the early novels of Ayi Kwei Armah belong to the 'subjective narrative', whereas the remaining two fall within what he terms the 'parabolical narrative'. Novels like Two Thousand Seasons and The Healers which belong to this category, are not of primary relevance to the theme of this study. The personal narrative voice of the early novels gives way to a more communal standpoint which pervades the narration of Armah's last two novels to date. Unlike these, Armah's later novels are built around individual focal figures whose evolution is described in the narratives. Although these central characters are presented against, and have to be perceived as being conditioned by, the environment they live in, that is modern Ghana, the novels nevertheless remain personal narratives. It is through the protagonists' eyes that the novelist examines society. In many respects, and this will have to be discussed later, we are led to realize how close Armah's themes and techniques are to those of two of our other novelists, namely Cheikh Hamidou Kane and Rachid Boudjedra. Furthermore a comparison between them would perhaps attempt an answer to the question of whether Armah is, along with Boudjedra and Kane, totally pessimistic or leaves room for hope.

Action in The Beautyful Ones revolves around one main central character. He is nameless and simply referred to as the man. He is a clerk at the Railway Administration and bears the characteristics of an anti-hero. The rest of the characters are secondary. Teacher, the man's friend and mentor, plays the function of the veteran. He advises him on how to behave in a society from which he himself has fled. Joseph Koomson, Minister of State, identical to the R.H. Sam Okoli in Achebe's No Longer at Ease, is the opposite of the man for he is referred to as the "hero of the gleam". He is much admired by the Man's wife Oyo as well as by her mother. The action of the novel is built essentially around the conflict, in the man's head, between two tendencies: the attractive existence of the gleam and corruption leading to easy success, and his determination to remain clean by fighting these impulses.

After a day's work, when the man goes back home, he is proud to have successfully turned down a bribe offered by Manankwa, a timber contractor who needed to hire wagons. As he tells his wife "Somebody offered me a bribe today... to get him an allocation" (The Beautyful Ones, 43). Her reaction is quick for she guesses that he refused the bribe and shouts at him: "And like

an Onward Christian Soldier you refused?" (The Beautyful Ones, 43). In the argument she develops, she sweeps aside her husband's scruples by making it clear to him that whatever the means he uses, only the result counts as far as she is concerned. She wants a "driver," not someone who hesitates constantly: "May be you like this crawling that we do, but I am tired of it. I would like to have someone drive me where I want to go" (The Beautyful Ones, 44). This metaphor of the driver and the car appears quite often in the novel and will be expanded later. For Oyo, the example of the successful driver who is no longer a pedestrian or a crawler is to be found in the person of Koomson and by extension in his wife Estella.

The striking features of Koomson and Estella are extensively expanded in two passages: the first pages of chapter four and in chapter ten. In chapter four, as the man is walking back from work towards the bus stop, he meets Koomson, a former classmate of the Teacher, recently turned Minister of State. The description of this episode however takes another dimension because each of the protagonists in presence - the man and Koomson - stands for antagonistic values and ethics. There are two consecutive sequences which are highly significant in that they contribute to explain the moral stand of the hero.

For the man, going back home is a really routine-like business and to him "[t]here was no hurry. At the other end there was only home, the land of the loved ones, and it was only the heroes of the gleam who did not feel that they were strangers. And he had not the kind of hardness that the gleam required" (The Beautyful Ones, 35). For him and the other walkers described in the passage, the people around are mere sufferers, mere "walking deads".

In opposition to the purposelessness of the man, his ordinariness and suffering, appears another character. The latter is not named directly. It is only incidentally, with the remark of one of the sellers who thinks she recognizes an important man, that we know it is Koomson who is sitting with Estella in the back seat of the chauffeur-driven black limousine. His car, instead of being depicted as an ordinary car, is personified. It becomes a shining object which is part of the person of Koomson. As the narrator puts it, the car is "an object of power and darkness and gleaming light [that] comes shimmering down in a potent moving stream". The noise of the engine loses its mechanical sound and becomes a "cool murmur".

To contrast with the "the slowness of those whose desire has nowhere to go" (The Beautyful Ones, 35), Koomson and Estella are in a hurry. They are going to a reception at the Atlantic-Caprice Hotel. Even when he recognizes the man, Koomson does not give him more than a few words to let him know that he will be visiting him the following Sunday. Throughout the whole

passage, Koomson is not referred to by his name. Instead, he is shown as being "the man dressed in a black suit" (The Beautyful Ones, 36), or "the suited man" (The Beautyful Ones, 37).

To Oyo and her mother everybody, like Koomson and Estella, is swimming towards what he wants. In their eyes, Koomson is the real hero. He is the one who is able to drive fast and to act as a provider to the needs of the loved ones regardless of the means he uses in the process. To Oyo, the most important thing in life is the way one is able to drive.

An example of such reprehensible behaviour can be found in the case of the fishing boat which Koomson acquires illegally by using Oyo's mother as a figurehead. But once the boat is purchased the promises he had made are quickly forgotten. However, although Oyo and her mother realize that they had been cheated, they continue to torture the man who consequently reads in the eyes of his children, "the reproach of the loved ones". This is why among other reasons, he is overcome by a feeling of guilt. As he tells Teacher whom he asks for advice, "I feel like a criminal. Often these days I find myself thinking of something sudden I could do to redeem myself in their eyes. Then I sit down and ask myself what I have done wrong, and there is really nothing. (The Beautyful Ones, 54)

Not unlike Baako, the central figure in Fragments, the man is shown to be a proper outsider. As he is told in reply by Teacher, "you have not done what everybody is doing... and in this world it is one of the crimes." (The Beautyful Ones, 54)

The comparison between The Beautyful Ones and Fragments can be taken further for there are many other common points. If for instance, both the man and Baako are similar, they both also feel the need to confide in a mentor. The inexperienced man of The Beautyful Ones pays a visit to Teacher because he wants to know whether he is wrong or not. In a similar manner, the newly-returned 'been-to' of Fragments confides in Juana and Ocran because he finds in them the only persons who understand his own preoccupations. Juana, by being both a foreigner and a psychiatrist can remain uninfluenced by the surroundings and offer objective advice. So much for his former teacher Ocran who, by being retired and no longer in touch with the newly-erected gods of modern Ghana, can judge society with a certain detachment.

However if this detachment is one of the characteristics of the mentors found in Armah's first two novels, there is nevertheless a noticeable difference between Juana and Teacher for example for, if the nakedness of the latter symbolizes the negation of the much desired suit (which is the definition *per se* of Koomson and Brempong), he feels totally concerned by

what has been happening around him since the soldiers returned from the war. On the contrary Juana remains totally unaffected by the pathological behaviour of her patients. As she herself admits, whenever the pressure becomes unbearable, she takes a ride to the sea-side or goes abroad to forget it for a while.

As a replica to the determination of the Teacher the man becomes conscious that this "little peace of mind is an illusion. As if any amount of hard work could ever at this rate bring the self and the loved ones closer to the gleam" (The Beautyful Ones, 95). And in a question he answers by himself, he wonders "[h]ow long [it would] take, and how hard the work, before there could be enough food for five, and something left over for chasing after the gleam? Only one way. There would always be one way for the young to reach the gleam. Cutting corners, eating the fruits of fraud." (The Beautyful Ones, 95)

The example of success through bold driving and fraud is personified in the character of Koomson. Starting as a railwayman, then as a docker at the harbour, he belonged to the working class. He had "blistered hands, toughened, calloused hands. A seaman's voice. Big, rough man, a man of the docks well liked by men of the docks." (The Beautyful Ones, 88). But once he got to Accra, and espoused the ideology taught at Winneba, he became one of the

> men who know nothing about politics [and who] have grown hot with ideology, thinking of the money that will come... Everybody who wants speed goes there [at Winneba], and the only thing demanded of them is that they be good at fawning. Is that the place that changed the dock worker Koomson?... He lives in a way that is far more painful to see than the way the white men have always lived here. (The Beautyful Ones, 89)

The following Sunday the man is able to see closely how his Party man, friend and former classmate actually lives. This can be examined through the analysis of two significant episodes: the first one is when Koomson and Estella visit the man and Oyo, the second one when the latter visit the former in their house in the Upper Residential Area. The antithetical position of these two passages reflects the actual conflict that takes place in the man's head, a conflict between a desire to succumb, like everybody else, to corruption and the gleam, and therefore open the road to success, and the determination to fight them, to remain clean and poor.

The man's house is not described. We simply understand that it is situated in a poor area of the town. Like Koomson's house it is situated on a hill but to get there he has to follow the bus route. During one of his daily journeys back from work the bus drives across an area which he is able to identify eyes closed for he says that "the air brings these places to the

open nose" (The Beautyful Ones, 40). Words such as heat, dust, rust, and decay often recur in the man's description of his surroundings. Here is for instance what he says of the public lavatory which is not far from his flat:

> Past the big public lavatory the stench claws inward to the throat. Sometimes it is understandable that people spit so much, when all around decaying things push inward and mix all the body's juices with the taste of rot. Sometimes it is understandable, the doomed attempt to purify the self by adding to the disease outside. Hot smell of caked shit split by the afternoon's baking sun, now touched by still evaporating dew. The nostrils incredibly are joined in a way that is most horrifying direct to the throat itself and to the entrails right through their end. (The Beautyful Ones, 40)

On the contrary the house of Joe Koomson is no longer in a public building but it is seen from the taxi as a storey apartment with its detached servants' quarters. It is situated in the Upper Residential Area which used to be a place reserved for Europeans. There is a big garden in front of the house with an expanse of lush green. The gate itself is a work of art for Oyo "stopped to look at the ironwork of the gate, tubes framed in the design of a rising sun, painted blue and gold. She stared at the gate with the longing interest of a woman thinking of getting herself something exactly like that as soon as she could." (The Beautyful Ones, 143)

Inside the house the difference is even more striking. The man confesses he has only old cushions with old covers which they use on a few "town-hall chairs" which he bought because they were long-lasting and too heavy for anybody to steal. When they receive the Koomsons, they offer them only what they can afford, that is no European drinks but made-in-Ghana spirits. In Koomson's house, the guests are invited to sit on a whole array of chairs and sofas, and they are given to admire the furniture which is being changed free of charge for the Koomsons by the State Furniture Corporation. They are presented a whole tray of imported drinks. While they notice the various expensive objects in their hosts' living room and the various people working for them (gardener, servants, chauffeur), the man acknowledges that "[t]here were things here for a human being to spend a lifetime desiring. There were things here to attract the beholding eye and to make it accept the power of their owner. Things of intricate and obviously expensive design." (The Beautyful Ones, 144)

As concerns the man's flat, there is no such elaborate description because there is simply nothing to describe. The man himself is among the unsuccessful sleepers described in the first chapter of the novel. He is an ordinary clerk and only a pedestrian. For her part, Oyo is shown to be overworked with her domestic duties and the children she has to look after. The description insists on her several confinements and the subsequent

remaining scar after the last delivery. Their social life is inexistent as are their occupations outside the house.

As for Estella and Joe Koomson, they are always in a hurry. They often go to the Atlantic Caprice Hotel and other chic places in town. When they receive the man and his wife, they were recovering from the previous night's outing and reveal they have had to go to three different night clubs. Estella is not saddled with children either. In the man's living room she not only makes it clear that the local spirits they are served do not agree with her constitution, but she also returns the man a limp handshake which he interprets as follows: "Estella's handshake was limp, and she withdrew in an insulting hurry and wiggled back in the chair, making it quite plain that she was used to softer and more caressing material beneath and behind her." (The Beautyful Ones, 130). Koomson for his part, strikes the man by the floppy softness of his hands and also by his size; he is larger than the chair. He is no ordinary man for he is not referred to as the suited man, but by his full title which is "His Excellency Joseph Koomson, Minister Plenipotentiary, Member of the Presidential Commission, Hero of Socialist Labour."

Another element of comparison between these two antithetical universes is to be found in the various references to the man's children. Already announced in the first chapter in general terms as simply "the loved ones" it is put in more specific terms here. To start with, we are told that the man's children bear African names: Deede, Adoley, and they are poorly dressed and underfed. On their way to their grandmother's the girl who is on her father's shoulders tells her brother about the things she sees on the way: Mike's father's car, a wireless, a television.... Her eyes

> roamed with an unsettled restlessness over everything along the way. Occasionally she would be unable to contain admirative comments over everything she saw along the way... Mike's father has a car... The wireless in the house we just passed is the biggest in the world... Television is very beautiful.... (The Beautyful Ones, 121)

The children's comments remain in the minds of their parents. They come back as an obsessive leitmotiv. For instance while they are wondering at the expensive things in Koomson's house their description is punctuated with this phrase "for the children" repeated in another paragraph as "for the little children". Thinking about their own children becomes more acute especially when they enter Koomson's garden and meet their daughter Princess. Not only does she bear a "white" name (other examples of names are given on page 126 of the novel), but she speaks English like a white child, with the fearless, direct look of a white girl". She is the opposite of Deede and Adoley of which the man says that "it seems that their eyes are

also learning this flat look that is a defense against hope" (The Beautyful Ones, 41). More generally spelled, "he thought of his own children's longing for things, and of the satisfaction of Koomson's little Princess..." (The Beautyful Ones, 149). This train of thought culminates in the man and Oyo's completely questioning the significance of their whole way of life:

> Supposing Deede could also have beautiful clothes with their beauty crossing the seas from thousands of miles away, and supposing Adoley could have a machine to ride around on, to occupy her attention while she was growing up, what would they know about ways that were rotten in the days of the disappeared parents? What would they care? What, indeed, would anybody care? (The Beautyful Ones, 145)

Although the narration makes a distinction between those in control, the drivers like Koomson, and the sleepers/sufferers like the man, there are various hints in the text that point at the coming downfall of the "heroes of the gleam," and even further at the coming reversal of roles between the man and Koomson, even if it is of a momentary effect and quite void of satisfaction for the man.

Unaffected by Oyo's complacent admiration for Koomson and Estella, the man, as we have mentioned earlier, guesses a big cheat in the business of the fishing boat. Eventually his fears prove to be totally justified. Oyo and her mother feed Koomson as their all powerful god, with the man sitting in the living room and facing them all and being able to reach detached and objective statements about what is actually taking place. For example, he is able to read on Koomson's face an expression of contentment which, for him, stands for the outward manifestation of some form of "idiotic happiness". More revealing however is the episode during which Koomson, while trying to please and impress his audience, reports a supposedly funny anecdote which took place in Parliament. He says that although "[s]ome people think being a Minister is all good time [..] sometimes I wish I had been a businessman instead" (The Beautyful Ones, 132). The story has it that a scholar was brought into Parliament to give the Parliamentarians, Ministers and Party activists a lecture on economics and the stages of economic growth. Not only did the whole audience sleep through the lecture which none of them understood, but by the end, the Attorney General, "who is one of our Party scholars," only wakes up from his drunken sleep to entertain the audience with a joke about "the stages of booze":

> Stage One - The Mood Jocose. Stage Two - The Mood Morose. Stage Three - The Mood Bellicose. Stage Four - The Mood Lachrymose. Stage Five - The Mood Comatose. Then the Attorney General fell down. He was in the final stage himself. We all said 'yeah yeah'. It was a fine day indeed. (The Beautyful Ones, 133)

Beyond its value as an anecdote this episode constitutes the announcement of the second movement in the novel. During a first phase, it was the 'heroes of the gleam' who were shown to be in control. From chapter one to nine, the emphasis has been on the achievements of the 'drivers' who were able to cut corners and drive towards what they wanted. The man was situated among the sleepers who were no decision makers but mere passive sufferers. From chapter ten onwards however begins another phase which, although temporary, shows a gradual change in the man's attitude towards the Koomsons and his like. While he was at first under the pressure of the loved ones, he acknowledges that he had (once?) been tempted by this life of success. As he reports it while preparing for the reception

> He had exchanged time off and gone down High Street, shopping for the special food and drink his wife had decided to feed Koomson and his wife with... The day before, going into the shops with his new money in his pocket, he had the uncontrollable feeling of happiness and power... When he had asked for all their white man's food, the beautiful long rice in the packet with the Afro-American Uncle Ben smiling on it, the tinned cake which had travelled thousands of miles from rich people's countries, and the New Zealand butter, he had known it was quite stupid to be feeling so good just because he was buying these things he could not in the end afford. Yet he could not help the smile that came to his lips and spread this feeling of well-being over all his body. If the aristocratic drinks, the White Horse Whisky and the VAT 69 had been available then, he would have bought them gladly, no matter how bitterly he would have cursed himself later. (The Beautyful Ones, 114-5)

This temptation however does not last long and he finally comes home with only made-in-Ghana spirits. And this change in the man's attitude, as we have mentioned earlier, is one of several hints that point at the downfall of the ones in control, and at a gradual reversal of roles whereby the man is shown to be taking the leading role.

Among these indicators that foreshadow a possible evolution in the novel, one can recall the way the investigation designed to rid the country's trade of corruption was perceived. Although the man's comment is of an embittered tone: "In the end it was being said that what had to happen with all these things had happened. The act had been made in the special Ghanaian way that allowed the really big corrupt people to pass through it" (The Beautyful Ones, 154), the emphasis is on such episodes that indicate that something is expected that will come and change this state of things.

A similar reaction is voiced by the man when other people tell him about the 'coup d'état' that has just taken place: "What after all could it mean? One man, with the help of people who loved him and believed in him, had

arrived at power and used it for himself. Now other people, with the help of guns, had come to this same power. What would it mean? (The Beautyful Ones, 157). Although he feels completely apart from all that was taking place, he nevertheless keeps the door open for some kind of hope. He still hopes that

> Some day in the long future a new life would may be flower in the country, but when it came, it would not choose as its instruments the same people who had made a habit of killing new flowers. The future goddess may come eventually, but before then where were the things in the present which would pave the way for it? (The Beautyful Ones, 159-60)

The military coup could ideally have been an indicator of this long expected new life. For the man however, it gives birth to a deep-rooted scepticism. Unlike the average Ghanaians who are demonstrating in the streets in favour of the new régime, he feels completely apart. For him, it is only a change of men, but the tune remains the same. While he refuses to take part in the demonstration, he is going to get more seriously involved with the latest political developments. For, when he arrives home, he learns that Koomson, fleeing an imminent arrest, has taken refuge in his flat. This episode is quite significant in that it reveals a profound change in the man. He is now the one who is taking things under his control while Koomson, who used to be more than self-assured the first time he came to the man's for dinner, now shows "fear coming out of every piece of him":

> Seeing the Party man there in front of him now, acting as if he saw himself entirely surrounded by hostile things and feared that every coming moment would turn out to be his last, the man remembered the last visit and wondered at the great contrast with the superconfidence of the days gone by. (The Beautyful Ones, 162)

While the man saw Koomson as being larger than the chair he was sitting on, this time he is shown to be hiding in darkness and afraid of light. The expression of "idiotic happiness" that could be read on his face has now given way to a rigid and imploring attitude indicating Koomson's despair. He is no longer the confident, fat, perfumed and soft one. This time, Koomson is filling the room with his farts, and the man notices that "his mouth had the rich stench of rotten menstrual blood." (The Beautyful Ones, 163). Not only has he come down from his Upper Residential Area to this filthy part of the town, but rot and dirt emanate from him as well. Ironically it is the latrine the man was so ashamed of that is going to constitute the only escape route for Koomson. It is no longer the man who is expecting Koomson to bestow boons and riches on him - in fact he saves him and does not ask for anything in return - but the converse. Koomson is entirely dependent on the man for his life and freedom. From the stylistic point of view, the man speaks more than Koomson. Imperative expressions such "Go, man!..., Head first..., This way" indicate that he has now the leading role. This is

further confirmed by the description of the former helping Koomson: he "took hold of Koomson and helped him over the rocks to the base of the breakwater. Then showing his companion what to do, he stooped low so that his head could not be seen from the road on the other side, and walked forward along the concrete structure." (The Beautyful Ones, 172) They both go to the boatman's home and after a quick haggling, the latter agrees to sail with the Minister to Abidjan. In passing the man notices in the boatsman a significant change, a change whereby he meant that "[i]n front of him there was no longer a master, but another man needing his help." (The Beautyful Ones, 174). As he says, "There was fear in the boatsman's voice still, but on this night it was not the fear of the weak confronted with the powerful. It was unmistakably the fear of one weak man in the presence of another just as weak, the potential prey of powerful enemies" (The Beautyful Ones, 173).

The question now arises as to why the man has helped Koomson escape from his enemies for, from the beginning of the novel, there is nothing to indicate that there is any particular area of common concern between them. It seems to me that the only justification is to be found in the fact that the man has undergone a radical change. As it is indicated when he gets ready to leave the boat,

> The Party man took his hand. 'Thank you'. the man heard the words, but he felt nothing for Koomson. 'We shall meet again' Koomson said. To the man the words sounded funny and childish, but, as if he were not himself but someone completely different, he heard himself repeating 'We shall meet again.' (The Beautyful Ones, 178, emphasis mine)

The man has unquestionably become someone different. This can be seen as the outcome of the purification rite he undergoes in the sea-water:

> For a second the man stood at the edge of the boat. A little wave passed underneath and the thing swayed softly. The man jumped out and went down into the blackness of the water...
> When he reached the beach he was very tired... But at the same time, even the cold feeling gave him a vague freedom, like the untroubled loneliness he had come to like these days, and in his mind the world was so very far away from the welcoming sand of the beach beneath him. (The Beautyful Ones, 178-9)

Not unlike Mihaimid in Tayeb Salih's Season of Migration to the North he can say: "All my life I had not chosen, had not decided. Now I am making a decision." (Season of Migration, 168).The man is now capable of reaching some form of understanding. On the beach he meets Manaan, but she is no longer the same. She has become a diseased soul, a mad and lone figure. There, he knows he has deceived only himself, and that "he would find no answers, from her, from Teacher, or from anybody else."

The circle is now closed. The decrepit bus of the opening chapter - which can be identified with the truck Solo mentions in Why Are We So Blest - has

now given way to a "small bus, looking very new and neat in its green paint". This is however the only new thing for the people inside are the same. They are mere watchers who see the driver offer a policeman a bribe, and who are going through the whole cycle again.

The return of shit, corruption and decay is to be symbolized in the appearance of the chichidodo:

> Over the school latrine at the bottom of the hill a bird with a song that was strangely happy dived low and settled on the roof. The man wondered what kind of bird it could be, and what its name was. But then suddenly, all his mind was consumed with the thoughts of everything he was going back to- Oyo, the eyes of the children after six o'clock, the office and every day, and above all the never-ending knowledge that this aching emptiness would be all that the remainder of his life could offer.
> He walked very slowly, going home. (The Beautyful Ones, 183)

In other words the man is back to square one. And the feeling that is invading him is precisely one of discouragement, culminating in a sensation of nausea which is quite similar to that of Baako Onipa in Armah's second novel, Fragments. While looking at his sister Araba's new born baby, he thinks: "Babyhood, infancy, going to school... the thought of a person having to go through the whole cycle again brought back his nausea, and suddenly the room to him felt too humid, too full with the mother, the child and him." (Fragments, 86)

The cycle referred to here concerns Baako. He is a brilliant student who gets a scholarship to study overseas in the United States. The story in Fragments begins with his relatives expecting his imminent return. In this novel there are three groups of characters, the relationship of which determines the meaning of the novel. There is between The Beautyful Ones and Fragments a similarity in characterization and this is reinforced by the existence of similar groups of central and secondary characters. The group of central characters is the smallest and most powerless one for it is composed of one member who is unable to adapt to the prevailing social norms of behaviour. We have seen how with the man in The Beautyful Ones, this type of character was presented as being a marginal one who refuses to conform and therefore stands as an anti hero. These characteristics are reciprocated in the central figure of Fragments. Baako Onipa is the returned 'been-to' whose return is surrounded by many expectations.

Naana's formulation of the terms of the rite of the departure ceremony keeps in close touch with the traditional world. She knows he will come back a different man "but we shall welcome him as the same". Baako's mother,

Efua, expresses a similar expectation, but in terms that are not only different but show a perversion of the old myth. As she tells Juana, the psychiatrist, "he went away to study. He will come back a man. A big man." (Fragments,34). The model Baako is expected to conform to is H.R.H.Brempong, a returning Ghanaian he meets at the airport. This is how the latter's arrival and welcome is rendered in the text:

> Three tough-looking men in their jumpers with their cloths balled around their waist were holding Brempong high above their heads. Around them a large crowd of the hero's relatives struggled to get closer to him, shouting, some singing in an ecstatic, emotional confusion. 'Eeeeei! Our white man, we saw you wave! We saw you!' 'The big man has come again!'. 'Oh, they made you a white man!' (Fragments, 56, emphasis mine)

The material outlook of Brempong's return will be contrasted later with that of Baako. Suffice it to say for the moment that there is a reversal of roles between the two returned ones. While, according to the departure ceremony, Baako was supposed to come back a charmed man, a wiser man who is expected to share his wisdom with the others, the meaning of his return is somewhat perverted. Instead of being a quest for knowledge as it is implied by the reference to Ananse, it has become an expectation of cargo, of material things. As Baako tells Juana when he visits her for psychiatric advice at Korle Bu Hospital, the myth has been modified :

> Now it has taken a modern form. The voyage abroad, everything that follows; it's very much a colonial thing. But the hero idea itself is something very old. It's the myth of the extraordinary man who brings about a complete turnabout in terrible circumstances. We have the old heroes who turned defeat into victory for the whole community. But these days the community has disappeared from the story. Instead, there is the family, and the hero comes and turns its poverty into sudden wealth. And the external enemy isn't the one at whose expense the hero gets his victory- he's supposed to get rich mainly at the expense of the community. (Fragments, 103)

As also underlined elsewhere in the novel by Baako "[t]he myths here are good... only their use... (Fragments, 120). In other words the perversion becomes clearer. It is no longer the traditional values which are revered but they have have given way to the newly-erected gods whose power is measured by another yardstick: the amount of material things the returning one is able to bring back from his stay abroad. This is precisely what is worrying Baako. While he is very much concerned with the conservation of tradition, he realizes that his designs are not compatible with the new modern Ghanaian society.

As will be seen later in the third part of this work, this gap between the expectations of the group and those of the returning ones gives birth to characters who not only do not conform a set of ready-made images but who also are seen as being liminal.These characters feel a deep frustration as they are aware of the perversion of the original promises. Such a view of a miscarriage is the feeling that is put forward by Rachid Boudjedra is his first two novels, La Répudiation (1969) and L'Insolation (1972).

TOPOGRAPHIE IDEALE POUR UNE AGRESSION CARACTERISEE

La Répudiation is not only the portrait of a woman dominated by a patriarchal chief but it is also a political satire, the story of a people frustrated of its revolution. The narrator Rachid tells his French girl friend Céline the story of his own childhood: his father Si Zoubir repudiates his wife and re-marries a much younger woman. Rachid becomes her secret lover whereas his brother takes refuge in drinking, homosexuality and later in suicide. If Rachid is sick it is not only because of this shock. He is taken to a psychiatric hospital after his arrest by a secret police, the "Membres Secrets du Clan," of which his father is a member. Evoking his shocking experiences to Céline and doing some secret political criticism constitute for Rachid a beneficial catharsis. Like the "Devin" who saw, as an "ancien maquisard," how the revolution was made to serve the personal interests of the group in power, Rachid feels the necessity to attack such socio-political structures that have allowed the feudal dictatorship of the father.

There is a continuity between La Répudiation and L'Insolation. The couple Rachid/Céline gives way to another one, Mehdi/Nadia, the erotomaniac nurse in whom Mehdi sees the instrument of repression. She thinks that Mehdi is a dissimulator and she does not believe what he says. According to him he arrived at the hospital after a sunstroke, but he later wonders if it was after a suicide attempt. The insolation becomes the symbol for the repression, the fear of the "Clan" and of the transgression of its taboos. Mehdi who has become the madmen's letter-writer knows the reason for their sickness. They are sick because they are scared of the "Clan" and its secret police, and also because of the feudal and technocratic group in power by whom religion is used to divert the people's attention. Traumatized by the war, by their experience of emigration, these men need another kind of treatment. As Mehdi is told by his adoptive spiritual father Djoha -the mad and revolutionary reader of Lenin and the Koran in Arabic - it is only through a "folie salvatrice," a controlled delirium, that the repressive norms of society can be transgressed.

Moving from an explicit denunciation of his socio-political target, Rachid Boudjedra in Topographie Idéale pour une Agression Caractérisée[3] focuses on the problems of emigration, a more convenient theme highlighted by the renewed outbreak of the racist murders of Algerian workers in France in 1973. Like Driss Chraibi who spent some time in Paris collecting data as he lived with a community of Algerian emigrants, Boudjedra was, during the three years he lived in Paris, in close contact with the Algerian community. His notes, he affirms, constitute the starting point of his third novel. The first object of his criticism is France as seen through the eyes of a newcomer, an unnamed protagonist - whom we have decided to refer to as Said for more convenience - France as an unknown and hostile world, but also some aspects of post-independence Algeria.

Topographie is basically the story of three *laskars*. They used to live in Paris, during the Algerian war of liberation, and they played an important part in the Algerian movement of resistance abroad. Now they have returned home to their native village, 'Le Piton,' where they are shown to be leading an altogether different life. The novelist makes it clear that they bear a certain responsibility in deliberately sending Said to his death. In his words, they are responsible for this "passage trop brutal de la paysannerie pauvre à un prolétariat précaire et instable" (Topographie, 198) ["this too quick passage from a poor peasantry to a precarious and unstable proletariat"]. The characters of the *laskars* are convenient scapegoats for Boudjedra who safely criticizes other aspects of Algerian reality such as bureaucracy and religious bigotry among others.

Two main themes are treated by Boudjedra in Topographie: the accusation of both Algerian and French society, and the transgression of taboos by the treatment of such delicate taboos that are generally not tolerated by censorship or morals.

Algerian society is for the narrator, restricted to the village,to "Le Piton". His criticism focuses on the anonymous characters, the three laskars (Lascar, spelled laskar by Rachid Boudjedra, who indicates that it is a word which comes from Arabic, meaning soldier. It may be a confusing word since it has different undertones in English and French. In French it conveys the idea of a clever, lazy and dishonest fellow, sometimes engaged in illegal dealings). They once were militants in the struggle for the independence of Algeria. The narrator even supplies dates: "les rafles de 1956 ou les ratonnades de 1961" (Topographie, 202) ["the 1956 round-ups and 1961 comb-outs"] Their clandestine activities in Paris are referred to in detail:

> (les laskars)... se mirent à transporter dans leurs poches des bombes et des tracts, décrétant que l'alcool était interdit, ainsi que l'herbe et les mélodies moyen-orientales, remplacées

> par l'hymne national scandé à la barbe des patrons immigrés partagés entre la collaboration avec les flics et le soutien au mouvement naissant ... sillonnant la Mégalopolis à scooter, éparpillant leurs paquets bien ficelés là où il fallait; ils s'étaient organisés pour ramasser les cotisations et faire le tour des chambres d'hôtel, des meublés, des restaurants, et des cafés sordides situés dans des passages fermés à l'espoir, arrivant toujours avant la police pour récupérer l'argent, les ordres et les pistolets-mitrailleurs.(Topographie, 200-201)
> [the 'laskars' ... began to carry bombs and tracts in their pockets, declaring the prohibition of alcohol, grass, and middle-eastern melodies, and their replacement by the national anthem, to be sung in the face of the North African bosses in Paris, hesitating, as they were, between collaborating with the cops and supporting the new movement... riding their scooters across the Megalopolis, scattering well wrapped packages in the right places; they organized the collection of contributions by touring hotel rooms, lodgings, restaurants, and squalid cafés situated in hopeless lanes ; they always managed to collect the money, the orders and the machine-guns before the arrival of the police.]

The exemplariness of their behaviour as members of the resistance is contrasted with their present occupation. The laskars are often described as being

> planqués derrière leurs dames ou dominos, (playing these games) sur le seuil de la boutique - centre et cœur du village où se mènent les tractations, se concluent les mariages, se réconcilient les paysans se disputant le même lopin de terre, s'obtiennent les autorisations, les passe-droits, les exonérations d'impôts, ... se contractent les mauvaises habitudes..."(Topographie, 89)
> "hiding behind their draughts or dominoes which they played on the threshold of the shop - centre and heart of the village where many negotiations were conducted, marriages settled, where peasants fighting for the same square of land were reconciled, where authorizations, unfair favours, tax exemptions were obtained, and where bad habits were caught."]

They are said to be secretly drinking alcohol or smoking kif in the shop. The narrator refers to their " théories fallacieuses" ['fallacious theories'] during which "les gens de la boutique (les laskars) voulaient à travers l'actualité même trop ancienne et historiquement dépassée, donner des leçons de haute politique, sûrs qu'ils étaient de la répétition mécanique des faits historiques... " (Topographie, 90) ["the shop people (i.e. the 'laskars'), certain as they were of the mechanical repetition of historical facts, wanted to administer lessons of lofty politics by using items of news, no matter how old or historically out of date."]. This is why, every Sunday, "ils projetteront une bande d'actualité consacrée à Atatürk, fiché dans leurs mémoires comme un authentique révolutionnaire parce qu'il a fait porter le chapeau à ses concitoyens."(Topographie, 96)

["they would show newsreels focusing on Atatürck who in their eyes was a genuine revolutionary because he managed to scapegoat his fellow-citizens."]

Of these laskars this is what Jean-Claude Vatin writes:

> Les laskars forment un groupe de trois bonshommes constitués en clan, le clan du "Piton," en compagnie de l'épicier local. De la boutique ils ont fait un repaire de trafic d'influence, de recrutement de la clientèle, d'intimidations et de marchandages divers. Anciens émigrés, rentrés fortune faite au bercail, ils vivent de leurs rentes, sacrifiant aux rites et aux traditions pour la galerie et aux facilités de la bamboche pour leur bien-être; leur impunité tenant au fait qu'ils apportent de l'argent à la communauté. Boivent, fument et du kif plutôt que le tabac de la régie algérienne, jouent, vivant la nuit et ronflant le jour. Un peu sorciers... un peu écrivains publics... bouilleurs de leur propre cru... souteneurs à l'occasion, agitateurs politiques perdus dans un rêve fumeux de régénérescence.(Vatin, 1976, 79)
>
> "The 'laskars' are a group of three fellows forming a clan, the clan of the 'Piton', including the local grocer. They transformed the shop into a den for various corrupt practices, client recruitment, intimidations, and various dealings. As returned and well-off 'been-to's' who were living on their pension, they pretended in public that they were conforming to the traditions, but they were having good blow-outs for their own well-being. They were buying their impunity in exchange for their contribution to the public funds of the community. Drinking and smoking kif rather than the local tobacco, gambling, living at night and sleeping during the day. They were witch-doctors ... public letter-writers, ... home distillers, ... occasional pimps, and political agitators who were lost in a hazy dream of political rejuvenation...."].

As Vatin also points out, "Rachid Boudjedra ne parle pas que de la seule France vue à travers Paris et son métro. Son scalpel débride d'autres abcès et le "Piton" fait l'objet d'une vivisection particulière... A travers eux (les laskars), l'auteur vise aussi tout un système" ["Rachid Boudjedra's target is not only France as seen from its Underground. He also uses his scalpel to lance other abscesses and the 'Piton' is the object of a special vivisection... Beyond the laskars, the author is also aiming at an entire system."]

One aspect of this system that Boudjedra attacks is its use of religion. The laskars are often described as bigots who use religion only to suit their own needs. In Boudjedra's words, a truly Muslim commandment is transformed into a business operation or mere indoctrination. The hypocrisy of Muslim muezzins and imams is shown in both Topographie and Le Démantèlement when he writes "avec leurs muezzins à l'abri derrière leurs bouteilles de rouge, en rupture de Dieu et en rupture des hommes"(Topographie, 142) ["with their muezzins taking shelter behind their bottles of red wine, divorced from both God and men"]. Similarly the narrator of Le Démantèlement says:

> je savais pertinemment qu'ils (les imams) consommaient de la viande de porc et buvaient du whisky dans des verres à thé... Ils aimaient festoyer et passaient leur temps de ripaille en festin, le chapelet en avant comme un passe-droit... Ils se gorgeaient de mots religieux et de mets délicieux, s'engraissaient sans vergogne et sortaient des versets coraniques à tout bout de champ. Ils fréquentaient les maisons closes et les louaient une fois par semaine, entre eux, à l'exclusion de tout intrus ou indiscret ou témoin gênant.... (Démantèlement, 90-91)
>
> ["I knew for a fact that they were eating pork and drinking whisky in tea-glasses... They enjoyed boozing and spent their time between carousals and feasts, holding their prayer-beads forward (as a password) to cover illegitimate favours. They gorged themselves with religious words and delicious meals, shamelessly putting on flesh and dispensing Koranic verses continuously. They were regular clients of a brothel which they rented once a week for their own exclusive use, safe from the prying eyes of intruders or unwanted witnesses."]

However, religion is only one aspect Boudjedra deals with. He also underlines the responsibility of the laskars for the murder of the peasant, who is the focal figure of the novel, by hooligans in the Paris underground. In the words of Rachid Boudjedra, they are responsible for this "passage trop brutal de la paysannerie pauvre à un prolétariat précaire et instable"(Topographie, 198) ["this too quick a passage from a poor peasantry to a precarious and unstable proletariat"]. It is the same persons who arouse in him the desire to go overseas. While giving him a false and idealized description of Paris, they knew beforehand that the passage was not without risks.

Other aspects of Algerian life are also criticized. But Boudjedra does not insist on them in this work (he develops one of these themes in L'Escargot Entêté which focuses on bureaucracy), limiting his criticism to a mere hint :

> Eux avaient confiance dans la lenteur des formalités administratives pensant qu'il serait vite dégoûté parce qu'il lui aurait fallu non seulement prouver son existence, mais aussi celle de sa mère, de son père, de ses grands-parents et de ses ancêtres. (Topographie, 113)
>
> [They were sure that he would quickly and disgustedly give up, owing to the slowness of the bureaucratic procedures that would ask him to prove not only his own existence, but also those of his mother, father, grand parents and ancestors.]

or in another passage: "Et eux, là-bas disant.. il n'aurait pas dû aller plus loin que la capitale... comptant sur la mauvaise foi et la hargne des bureaucrates pour lui refuser le nombre incalculable d'autorisations dont il a besoin pour quitter la contrée."(Topographie, 110-111) ["And the others back home thinking that ... he shouldn't have gone further than the capital, ...

relying on the dishonesty and the surly disposition of the bureaucrats who would refuse him the countless number of permits that he needed to leave the country."]

A summary of Boudjedra's criticism of Algerian society is provided by Vatin when he writes:

> A travers eux, l'auteur vise aussi tout un système. Les références à "quelque ville prétentieuse" - alors que ce qui reste de la paysannerie n'y peut trouver d'emploi et doit s'expatrier pour survivre - ne sont pas gratuites. Alger pourrait bien être une Mégalopolis à peine moins dommageable que Paris. Une simple incidente... souligne les épreuves pour trouver un emploi, la toute puissance de l'administration, le poids considérable d'une bureaucratie triomphante. D'autres phrases mettent en cause certaines pratiques religieuses, le maraboutisme rural, ... mais aussi la déchéance des serviteurs de la foi, tels ces muezzins des bidonvilles "à l'abri derrière leur bouteille de rouge en rupture de Dieu et en rupture des hommes". Mais là, c'est bien l'émigration qui est en cause.(Vatin, 1976, 89)
>
> [Through them (the 'laskars'), the author also points at an entire system. The existence of 'some pretentious city' - with its large numbers of unemployed peasants compelled to go into exile for survival - is not gratuitous. Algiers could be as blame-worthy a metropolis as Paris. A simple hint emphasizes the ordeal of job searching, the power of the administration, the considerable weight of a triumphant bureaucracy. Other passages condemn some religious malpractices, rural maraboutism, but also the corruption of the servants of God, such as the muezzins in the shanty towns 'taking shelter behind their bottles of red wine and divorced from both God and men'. But above all, it is indeed the process of emigration that is criticized.]

Rachid Boudjedra adds to his criticism a description of the life of emigration. This concern is based on real facts: the list of the eleven Algerian emigrants murdered within a fortnight, published by the 'Amicale des Algériens en Europe' (154-155), and the communiqué of the Algerian daily newspaper, El Moudjahid, announcing the government's decision to stop emigration to France (225-226). Boudjedra however does not insist on the political or economic aspect of emigration, but rather on the physical and moral misery in which the emigrants live.

Several passages (173 to 177, 200, 203) mention these men who are "transbordés de train de marchandise en camion de ramassage des ordures (and who) commencent une quête hallucinante" (223) which throws them on "grabats humides et moisis et éventrés" ["trans-shipped from goods trains onto refuse disposal lorries (and who) begin a hallucinatory quest which throws them on "damp and ripped open musty beds"] of some slum or overcrowded hotel. They are thrown into the world of exploitation where they are dominated by some

unscrupulous overseer of some working site, where they are exposed to bad weather and doing dangerous tasks. Not to mention some of their own countrymen, who take advantage of the system and specialize - like the "devins de la Casbah européenne (242), the forgers masquerading as public letter-writers and the traffickers - in the much needed false certificates of registration and work permits. In so doing, Rachid Boudjedra is underlining the negative aspects of emigration, inserting his criticism within the reality of events, dated by excerpts from newspapers.

But if the criticism concerns the responsibility of the Algerian system for the dangers represented by emigration, the author also points at the French side. He directs his indictment at the conditions which in France, make this exploitation and murder possible. The laws of capitalism are denounced in connection with the economic exploitation of emigrants, who are confronted with political variations, public hatred, racist behaviour, police harassment, and injustice as well as press falsifications:

> mais alors, quant à publier sa photo dans les journaux, ça vous ferait mal. Le dernier pompiste, éraflé par des adolescents en quête de quelques sous, retrouve sa photo en triple exemplaire dans toutes les feuilles de chou. Mais eux, ils ne sont pas beaux... des apaches quoi! Je suis sûr que vous ne ferez pas grand' chose pour retrouver ses assassins. Des falsifications, des arrangements, des dossiers égarés, ça s'est déjà vu.... (Topographie, 179)
>
> [but they wouldn't put his photograph in the papers. In every paper and in every rag you will find the portrait in triplicate of the latest petrol station attendant who is scratched by a few adolescents in search of a few pennies. As for them, they are so ugly … like apaches! I am sure you won't bother to find his murderers. I know that things can be fixed and falsified, and files can easily go astray....]

Extremism such as that of the French right wing is also condemned. In connection with the murder, the author says it is the action of "certains hommes frottés de quelques idées politiques nauséabondes (qui) jouaient aux bouchers sans reproche pour mieux préciser la démarcation entre leur peau et la sienne..."(Topographie, 160) ["some men rubbed with a smattering of political ideas who played the irreproachable butchers eager to draw the line between the colour of his skin and theirs."]

Generally speaking and like the other African novelists, the question of language is a thorny one in Boudjedra's work. He has acquired fame with his first novel La Répudiation which was written in French. But then only a tiny part of the French readership understood the novel or at least thought it did. The Algerian readership for its part was unable to read it for various reasons relating to language competence and temporary censorship. But even now, as Boudjedra claims to have reverted to Arabic, he writes in a

classical form of Arabic which is still hermetic and inaccessible to a majority of his Algerian readers. Nevertheless, if Boudjedra is aware of this double frustration and feels thwarted, he has at least exploited two of the possibilities a Maghrebine writer has at the moment. And although the language factor constitutes a hindrance to a good and large reception of his writings, at least no one who reads them is likely to be indifferent to them.

LES BOUCS

Another Maghrebine novelist, Driss Chraibi, has had a similar experience with his reading publics. Having received literary sanction in France, he was, for a long time, the object of a heated controversy in his home country, a controversy called "la querelle du passé simple," commented upon by his compatriot Tahar Ben Jelloun when he pointed out that the Francophone Moroccan novelist is denied authenticity and legitimacy.

His novel Les Boucs is another case of the treatment of the theme of the outsider in a Maghrebine francophone novel and many similarities can be traced with Rachid Boudjedra's Topographie Idéale Pour Une Agression Caractérisée. To begin with, Boudjedra and Chraibi are both North African novelists using French as their literary medium of expression. And although they are not of the same generation (Chraibi is older than Boudjedra) both of them concentrate on the theme of emigration. Topographie is the story of one day in the life of an Algerian emigrant, whereas Les Boucs covers the life span of Yalann Waldik, a young Berber from Algeria. Both heroes, the peasant of Topographie and Yalann Waldik are out in their reckonings because both of them have been deceived by a certain kind of publicity. By giving the peasant unlikely accounts of their stay in Paris, the "laskars" of Topographie arouse in him the desire to go abroad. The peasant who believed them himself discovers the publicity posters in the underground and misunderstands their meaning. Yalann Waldik is equally deceived by the publicity posters set in Algiers which promised the emigrant-to-be a radiant future in France :

> Des panneaux publicitaires en la bonne vieille ville d'Alger, à l'intention de ces pauvres gourdes d'Arabes et qui proclament en lettres rouges et immenses que la main-d'œuvre manque en France, que la démocratie abonde en France, qu'il n'y a qu'à s'inscrire dans telle agence qui supporterait même les frais de voyage.... (Les Boucs,121).
> ["Billboards with posters in our good old city of Algiers for the benefit of those poor dumb Arabs that announce in big red letters that workers are needed in France, that democracy abounds in France, that all you have to do is go down to such-and- such an agency and they'll even pay you trip."(Harter,

77)]

This is very much like the "laskars" telling the peasant that his trip in the underground would be as simple as a children's game. The missionary of Les Boucs plays the same role as the "laskars". He is at the origin of Waldik's desire for emigration.

Both authors again point to the economic causes of emigration. Whereas Boudjedra tells the reader that the peasant was obliged to emigrate in order to ensure the survival of his family, Chraibi indicates that it is because "la main d'œuvre manque en France" that the young Berber has decided to emigrate. However both itineraries have a negative outcome. They are the expression of a failure as lived by the unconventional figure of the anti-hero. They are not, like Brempong in Armah's Fragments "a sort of charmed man, a miracle worker...(who) comes and turns ... poverty into wealth" (Fragments, 146). If the emigrant of Topographie is killed within his first hours in Paris, Yalann Waldik in Les Boucs undergoes something similar to death. Not only has it not come up to his expectations, but he has been reduced to the state of plant or animal, living in a kind of closed and almost underground universe. We have seen how the location of Topographie in the Parisian underground can give birth to symbolical interpretations. In a similar way, the hero of Les Boucs develops a constant obsession with underground life. The North African emigrants, or the "Boucs", are said to live in either "les caves Nord-Africaines de Gennevilliers" or in caverns and Waldik describes his work in the mines of Northern France as "les grandes profondeurs". Like the universe of the Underground which is half-real and half-imaginary, these "grandes profondeurs" also resemble the labyrinths of the mind in the case of Waldik for the mine is the only place where he feels safe.

Boudjedra and Chraibi do not relate the failure of this voyage to the same causes but both significantly end up with the presentation of outsiders which will be endeavoured in part two of this work. However, before moving to a comparison between the two outsiders, it is necessary to present briefly the action of Les Boucs.

This is what Chraibi himself declares about the novel: "En France, pays de la liberté et de la fraternité, Ferdi (the focal figure of Chraibi's Le Passé Simple, 1954) assiste à la lente décristallisation humaine de ses propres camarades de misère: ce fut Les Boucs[...] Cette civilisation européenne à laquelle il croyait, il s'aperçoit à peine débarqué en France qu'elle n'existe que dans les livres et dans son imagination"(Déjeux, 1973, 281) ["In France, the land of liberty and fraternity, Driss Ferdi is the witness of the slow human decomposition of his own companions in misery: this was Les Boucs. ...As soon as he disembarks, he realises that this

European civilisation in which he believed existed only in books and in his imagination"]

It is structured into three main sections called "Copyright," "Imprimatur" and "Nihil Obstat" and chronology is not respected. The chronological starting point of the novel is to be found in the last chapter of the part Nihil Obstat, but the logical link between them is the evolution in time of Yalann Waldik from childhood to maturity.

Driss Chraibi develops several plots at the same time in Les Boucs. As indicated in the last chapter it is the story of a ten-year-old Algerian shoe-shine boy in Bône (now Annaba) who is lured by a French Christian missionary who promises him a brilliant future in France which he describes as the land of milk and honey.

By calling his novel "Les Boucs," Chraibi suggests that the experience of this young Berber is not isolated and that the then 300 000 North African emigrants in France have made the same calculations and have had similar dreams. The contrast between the young Berber's enthusiasm and the hopeless life of the "Boucs" in the North African caves of Gennevilliers is already announced by the narrator who understands that he has been lured by the publicity posters he saw in Algiers before his departure. Once in France he becomes acquainted with "les boucs," a group of twenty-two Algerian emigrants, and Raus, another Berber from Algeria. Two women share the life of Waldik: Simone the French woman with whom he has a child, Fabrice, who suffers from meningitis, and Isabelle whose father is said to have died in a concentration camp during the second world war. He also has contacts, through Simone, with a French writer called Mac O'Mac who is supposed to help him publish the manuscript he wrote during his last stay in prison.

The biography of this young Berber, representing Waldik himself, therefore stands as a symbol for the itinerary of all North African emigrants. It is also the itinerary of Waldik alone whose story develops along parallel lines and who is said to have written a book about the same North Africans of whom he seems to act as a kind of spokesman.

While presenting the North Africans in France the novel displays certain cultural references which integrate it within a specifically French "horizon d'attente". An analysis of the epigraphs for instance shows how Driss Chraibi inserts his novel within European literature and culture. But although such indicators point at the "lieu d'énonciation" from which Les Boucs is written, it can also be seen as deviating from the present norms. In fact the novelist portrays a major outsider, Yalann Waldik, who sees French society both from within and without. Our approach to the novel will therefore follow two major lines. First, an assessment of Chraibi's

conforming to the exigencies of the reading public will be done in the light of such textual indicators as the exergues, dedication, postface, and other stereotyped descriptions of North Africans. Our second point will be to show how, within this apparent conformity, Chraibi develops the presentation of a major outsider who, in the words of Mac O'Mac, does not correspond to the standard image of the Arab.

Addressed to two French women, the dedication situates the novel within a specific audience. For the average French reader the North Africans are referred to as "Bicots," second-rate human beings who live at the margin of society. By seemingly describing these Arabs from the point of view of the average French reader Chraibi uses clichés and stereotypes. To begin with these Arabs are referred to as the "Boucs" or the "Bicots," pejorative words often used by the average Frenchman to designate the North Africans. The latter have no names in the novel. They are like shadows; as the racialist French would say they are all "Mohameds"; they all look the same. The only exception is Raus, but even then, his name is only a nickname from the German word for 'out'[4].

They are compared to rats and dogs living in a dark underworld, "l'un suivant l'autre comme une fuite de rats"(26) ["one following the other like fleeing rats"(Harter, 20)] or "pareils à ces vessies de chiens giclant sur tous les réverbères d'une rue"(27) ["similar to bladders of dogs that let go at every lamppost on the street"(Harter, 20)]. Stressing their animal aspects the narrator says they are following mere instincts of violence, hunger, theft, cold ... But above all, they are highly marginalized for, as the epigraph of chapter 2 of Imprimatur suggests, they look like prisoners in a concentration camp. The narrator himself says that "parmi les 300.000 Arabes de France, ils étaient les résiduels, les parias"(55) ["among the 300 000 Arabs in France, they were the residuals, the outcasts" (Harter, 36)].

Even the women of the novel, Simone and Isabelle, are drop-outs. Simone is a "fille-mère, sans métier, sans stabilité, sans argent, sans famille, sans espoir - sinon le trottoir ou le suicide ou l'avilissement quotidien" (Les Boucs, 76) ["daughter-mother, no job, no stability, no money, no family, no future, nothing but the street or daily degradation."(Harter, 49). Her French neighbours in Villejuif pity her but also show her that she is marginal. Isabelle is probably the daughter of a Jew who died in a German concentration camp during the second world war. She is assimilated with the others, the Arabs for, as the narrator says: "...Isabelle descendit, ...et se joignit à leur danse ... Mais même Waldik, resté dans la voiture, savait que maintenant il y avait 23 Boucs"(Les Boucs, 191) ["..Isabelle got out, ..., and joined their dance... Even Waldik recognized that now there were twenty-

three Butts."(Harter, 121)] The characters presented in the novel therefore appear to behave as the French reader would expect them to. They are locked away in a distant place, the suburbs of Paris, or the North African "caves" of Gennevilliers which are similar to some concentration camp.

This is what is suggested by the epigraph opening the second chapter of "Imprimatur". As it is mentioned at the bottom of the epigraph, it is quoted from David Rousset's L'Univers Concentrationnaire:

> Des hommes sans conviction, hâves et violents; des hommes porteurs de croyances détruites, de dignités défaites; tout un peuple nu, intérieurement nu, dévêtu de toute culture, de toute civilisation, armé de pelles et de pioches, de pics et de marteaux, enchainé aux Loren rouillés, perçeur de sel, déblayeur de neige, faiseur de béton; un peuple mordu de coups, obsédé de paradis, de nourritures oubliées, morsure intime des déchéances - tout ce peuple le long du temps. (quoted in Les Boucs, 25).
>
> ["Men without conviction, emaciated and violent; men whose beliefs are shattered and whose dignity is destroyed: a whole people naked, nude inside, stripped of all culture and civilization, armed with shovels and hoes, pickaxes and hammers, chained to rusty machines, diggers of salt, sweepers of snow, mixers of cement; a people consumed with beatings, obsessed with paradise, with foods long forgotten, the intimate bite of misfortune - all of these people throughout the time." (Harter, 19)]

Obviously Chraibi wants the reader to notice the similarity between "ce peuple le long du temps" and the "Boucs" themselves. And examples can be found in the text of the chapter which correspond exactly to that epigraph. But beyond the textual and thematic resemblances, it is something else which is implied. In so quoting from European sources, the novelist situates himself and his work. It is not a mere North African novel written in French, but it becomes a novel capable of reaching universality. The exergues include quotations from Ward C. Halstead's Brain and Intelligence, Albert Camus' La Peste, and Vsevolod Vichnevsky's La Tragédie Optimiste.

This is where the deviant character of Les Boucs appears. A double deviation. The first one, which may be called cultural, elevates a North African novel to the status of a universal literary reference. The second one is more technical. Not only is Yalann Waldik an anti-hero, but he contradicts the traditional image of the Arab who, like the peasant in Topographie, should be illiterate. The central figure of the novel is therefore presented under unusual traits. To begin with, his physical appearance is not standard for an Arab. When he arrives by plane at Le Bourget airport in Paris, he is said to be correctly dressed:

> Un passager est resté en arrière. Vêtu d'un complet de toile légère, sec et maigre, il tremble dans l'air un peu vif du matin, il a la pipe aux dents, les cheveux au vent... Yalann

> Waldik alluma sa pipe et se dirigea vers l'aérogare.(Les Boucs, 107-108)
> ["One passenger stayed behind. He was dressed in a suit of light linen. Spare and thin, he was shivering in the brisk morning air, a pipe clutched in his teeth, hair blowing in the wind... Yalann Waldik lights his pipe and walks towards the airport." (Harter, 69)].

After his stay in France his physical condition has not improved and the implication is that his stay overseas has corrupted him, as is underlined by his imaginary dialogue with (another) young Berber he meets at the airport, on his momentary return to Algeria:

> C'est le petit Berbère qui me bouleverse... Comme sa voix est grêle- et grêle est son âme! Il a posé son panier de gagne-miettes et me regarde... Oh! il n'a pas besoin de parler, ni moi non plus. Deux oiseaux se sont touchés de l'aile, l'un blessé et regagnant son nid, l'autre à peine avorton et qui a si peur dans cette contrée inconnue. Veille et garde tes ailes, épargne le grain et souffre en silence. Sois humble, sois plein d'amour pour ceux-là même qui t'étriquent et te méprisent; tu voleras et tu connaitras la prison et auras faim, tu auras froid, mal à l'âme, misère au corps; pétris par la misère et blottis en elle comme en un trou à rats, tes propres compatriotes se chargeront de t'exploiter et de t'avilir, à moins qu'il ne te saille des pectoraux...(Les Boucs, 102-103)
> ["The little Berber boy I see upsets me deeply.... His voice is shrill, as shrill as his soul! He has put down the basket that earns his daily crumbs and looks at me, ... He has no need to say anything, nor do I. Two birds have touched feathers, one wounded and going back to the nest, the other barely an abortion, so very frightened in this strange land. Watch over and take care of your wings, save your wheat, and suffer in silence. Be humble, be full of love even towards those who belittle you and make fun of you. You will soar into the air, and you will know prison and hunger, you will know cold and misery in soul and body. Eaten by your wretchedness and cowering in it like a rat in its hole, even your compatriots will exploit you and degrade you. Unless you grow some pectorals...."(Harter, 22)].

The other unusual trait of Waldik is that he is an intellectual who is rejected by the French. As Mac O'Mac remarks, he is "un intellectuel... venu d'un autre continent, d'une autre somme d'histoire [et qui] détruit nos conceptions du Bicot standard"(Les Boucs, 75-6) ["an intellectual... from another compendium of history... (who) destroy(s) our concepts of the standard Arabo" (Harter, 49)]. He is therefore an anomaly, someone who does not fit into a ready-made stereotype. he is not "un passif d'Arabe fait de glandes atrophiées et d'âmes desséchées"(Les Boucs, 31) ["a passive Arab with his glands atrophied and his soul shriveled up"(Harter, 22)]

For the various reasons explained earlier, Waldik is an outsider, both vis-à-vis the North African emigrants and the French, like Mac O'Mac. The latter sees in him "un Nord-Africain nommé Waldik (qui) avait existé (et qui) avait voulu jouer les Gandhi ou les Tarzan en Europe (et qui) avait en fin de compte avalé cinq grammes de gardénal"(Les Boucs, 89) ["a North African named Waldik (who) had existed (and had) wanted to play Gandhi or Tarzan in Europe, and had ended up swallowing five grams of sleeping pills" (Harter, 57)]. Not only is his manuscript not conventional, but Mac O'Mac also tells him that he misses his target as far as the subject matter is concerned :

> Même pour le problème des Nord Africains qui lui tient à cœur, il n'est absolument pas dans le coup. Parce qu'il oublie que c'est à un public français doué de réactions françaises qu'il désirerait s'adresser.... non seulement il ne se comporte pas en néo-européen, non seulement il détruit nos conceptions du Bicot standard et a le tort d'oublier que tout ce qu'on lui demande c'est d'être purement et simplement un Bicot.(Les Boucs, 76)
>
> ["Even in the problem of North Africans which is so close to his heart, he is absolutely not with it. He forgets that he wanted to address a French audience.... Not only he does not comport himself as a pseudo-European, not only does he destroy our concepts of the standard Arabo, he even goes as far as to forget that all we ask of him is to be purely and simply an Arabo."(Harter, 48-9)]

It is true that he is no ordinary Bicot. His clear-sightedness makes him notice all the anomalies. On several occasions his answers baffle his interlocutors. Witness for example what he tells Dupont, the man in charge of the emigrants, who gives him a "carte de chômage" and asks him to report to the unemployment center every week:

> Je l'ai mangée... J'ai mangé ma carte de chômage. Mais ça ne m'a pas nourri. Il m'en faut un kilo par jour- et je serai içi tous les jours crées par Dieu et je vous reclamerai un kilo de cartes de chômage: c'est la quantité qu'il me faut."(Les Boucs, 120)
>
> ['I ate it... I ate my unemployment card. But it didn't give me any nourishment. I need a kilo of them every day, and I'll be here every God-created day to demand a kilo of unemployment cards. That's how many I'll need' " (Harter, 76-7)].

He is also able to see that Mac O'Mac is not the friend of the North Africans. He knows that he accepts bribes and that he exploits them to make a living. He knows that

> Mac O'Mac est le représentant de ces opprimés et son nom est célèbre jusque dans le plus humble gourbi de Kabylie. Car ils savent- et je sais maintenant- que la parole ne doit jamais être directe et que, si quelque trente millions de Nord Africains souffrent et espèrent ce n'est jamais à eux de s'exprimer, mais bien à un Mac O'Mac. Régime de dattes ou pot

> de vin en espèces, exploitation de la souffrance et de l'espérance humaines et, du même coup, affirmation de la personnalité politico-littéraire de Mac O'Mac, que vaut une morale?"(Les Boucs, 101).
> ["Mac O' Mac is the representative of these poor souls, and his name is known in the humblest shack in the remotest mountains of Algeria. They know, and I know too, that one must never speak directly, that if some thirty million North Africans suffer and wait, it is not for them to express themselves, but for a Mac O' Mac to do it for them. Diet (sic) of dates or jug of wine in hand, the exploitation of suffering and of human hope, and, at the same time, the affirmation of the precious political and literary personality of Mac O' Mac, what is the worth of a moral principle?"(Harter, 63)]

Yalann Waldik is therefore guilty of usurpatory discourse. It is someone like Mac O'Mac who is legally entitled to represent the North Africans, not a North African himself. A "Bicot" like him should not be capable of discourse. He is only there to be talked upon. This is why Waldik is not rejected by Mac O'Mac as a person, but as a symbol for the whole French audience, people, and culture. To a certain extent, I think that this may be a case of literary illegitimacy. As one of the old neighbour ladies puts it: "Mais ma petite, c'est à nous de le civiliser et je ne permettrai pas à un arabe de barbariser une représentante du peuple français."(77) ["But, my dear, our mission is to civilize, and I cannot allow an Arab to barbarize a representative of the French people"(Harter, 49)]. Yalann Waldik has overthrown, or at least tried to overthrow Mac O'Mac and has set himself as the guide of the North Africans in France, and his being taken to the airport by Mac O'Mac looks like a mere deportation.

Our reading of Driss Chraibi's Les Boucs aims at highlighting some important aspects: the conforming to the expectations of a foreign reading public on the one hand, but on the other, the emergence of a major outsider in the character of Yalann Waldik. A thematic survey has shown how the hero evolves from the status of a stranger to that of a destructive outsider, from reason to madness, and finally to a certain form of realism or pessimism.

While addressing a foreign public, Chraibi, like Boudjedra, seems to play the rules of the game according to the laws of the "pacte référentiel," that is the rules set by the readership. Among these rules are the reproduction of stereotypes of which the primary slang words referring to North Africans stand as an illustration. Both novelists portray typical North Africans. Illiterate, unable to understand the written messages of the city (publicity posters, wall announcements...), these emigrants are hostile and their odd behaviour is in turn shown to provoke the hostility of the European. They are the perfect image of the Other, the foreigner, unable to be integrated

into a world of which he stands as an anti-thesis. Witness for example the emphasis laid by Chraibi on the destructive instincts of Raus who, when he is told not to use the plum-trees for the fire, replies: "Le prunier, non ? Il est stérile depuis deux ans. Et même s'il ne l'était pas est-ce qu'un Bicot comme toi ou moi a besoin de prunes?"(Les Boucs, 13) ["The plum-tree? It hasn't produced anything for two years. And even if it had, what does a lousy Arab like (you or) me need with plums?" (Harter, 12)]. Raus in Les Boucs symbolizes the "typical" Arab for whom objects of civilization (such as a chair or a door) are mere combustibles. He also materializes one of the clichés which has it that an Arab is without, or ignorant of, French/European culture for, when Waldik tells him about the French maréchal de Saint Arnaud who said "Nous entrerons dans ces Arabes comme dans du beurre," he replies: "Je ne le connais pas... Bien plus, je ne fréquente pas de maréchaux. Au surplus, je ne vois pas comment, en quoi et pourquoi un Français, fût-il maréchal, serait entre la vie et moi."(Les Boucs, 57) ["We will get inside these Arabs like a knife cutting into butter. ... I don't know him... What's more, I don't know any marshalls. And even more, I don't know how or why any Frenchman, even a marshall, would come between life and me." (Harter, 37-8)]

Although the message of Boudjedra is similar, his formulation of the incompatibility between the two worlds takes a different shape. The antinomy of the two worlds is shown in contrasting pairs such as symmetry/deformity, logic/unreason, etc.

SEASON OF MIGRATION TO THE NORTH

Not unlike Driss Chraibi's Les Boucs, Season of Migration to the North by the Sudanese Tayeb Salih tells two stories at the same time. As can be seen in the following summary the story is told by an unnamed narrator with some evident autobiographical overtones, but the hero is Mustafa Sa'eed, someone whose life the narrator gradually reconstitutes.

Mihaimid refers to himself as the outstanding young man in the village, who should he have stayed in the village instead of going overseas would have become as influential as his friend Mahjoub. Instead of that, he went overseas to spend seven years to obtain a doctorate. As he comes back to the village with an eagerness to return to his native community of Wad Hamid, he discovers that the place that he was intended to occupy in Wad Hamid has been taken by a stranger - Mustafa Sa'eed. The itinerary of Mihaimid is contrasted with that of two characters. One is Mahjoub, a son of the land and a schoolmate of his; the other is Mustafa Sa'eed, a stranger about whom not much is known. Mihaimid admits that he has spent some seven years

overseas delving into the life of an obscure English poet. On his return, he only manages to become an ineffectual inspector of primary education working in Khartoum. In the meantime, Mahjoub, who has left school very early, has made his way up and has now become one of the local notables.

Miahimid's eagerness to return to his native Wad Hamid is somewhat moderated by the shadows of both Mahjoub and Mustafa Sa'eed. Despite his efforts to become again a true insider, he has to rely on Mahjoub and others to obtain information about what is going on in the village. His reluctance to understand certain customs in the village also makes him gradually become an outsider, as opposed to the stranger Mustafa Sa'eed who was not "a local man but a stranger who had come five years ago, had bought himself a farm, built a house and married Mahmoud's daughter - a man who kept himself to himself and about whom not much was known"(Season, 2)

The truth about Mustafa Sa'eed is that not much is known about him. The narrator has to conduct a long and careful inquiry, both in Wad Hamid and elsewhere in order to reassemble the bits that form the puzzle of the life of Mustafa Sa'eed. To start with Mihaimid discovers that there is a role reversal between him and Mustafa Sa'eed. In Wad Hamid, it is Mustafa Sa'eed who is the outstanding man. Despite his being a stranger, he has managed to make himself indispensable. As soon as he settles in the village of Wad Hamid, he marries a local girl and becomes a farmer who soon makes himself liked and respected. As Mahjoub tells Mihaimid, his contribution to the Agricultural Project Committee is much appreciated and has won him the respect of the whole population of Wad Hamid. When Mihaimid arrives and is greeted by this Mustafa Sa'eed, the latter treats him as an intruder. At which the narrator remarks: "I was furious - I won't disguise the fact from you... Look at the way he says we and doesn't even include me, although he knows that this is my village and that it is he - not I - who is the stranger"(Season, 9). Despite this cold welcome, Mihaimid is soon taken into the secrets of Mustafa Sa'eed as the latter reveals to him things that no one in the village knows about.

On their first encounter both Mustafa Sa'eed and the narrator feel they have something in common. Each one of them sees the other as a kind of twin, or a literary double. This is why on the one hand, Mustafa Sa'eed progressively discloses to him aspects of his life which he has kept secret so far. On the other hand, if the narrator is attracted by the mystery surrounding Mustafa Sa'eed, the former conducts a careful inquiry into the stranger's life, an inquiry which seems to find its justification in the narrator feeling that the place he expected, and was expected to hold in the

village has somehow been taken by this Mustafa Sa'eed. This theme, which I have called a role reversal between insider and outsider, is part of a more complex relationship between narrator and hero of which more will be said later in this analysis.

What the narrator discovers is this. Mustafa Sa'eed is a Sudanese from Khartoum who, as soon as he entered the white school, proved to be a prodigy. Later sent for further studies to Cairo and then to London, Mustafa Sa'eed remarks: "the ship set sail with me from Alexandria... My sole concern was to reach London, another mountain larger than Cairo, where I knew not how many nights I would stay"(Season, 28). There he led a successful academic life. He studied law at Oxford University and was later appointed lecturer in economics at London University at the age of twenty-four, before being sentenced "at the Old Bailey to seven years' imprisonment," as a result of his highly eventful sexual life. As the public prosecutor put it he was "a werewolf who had been the reason for two girls committing suicide, had wrecked the life of a married woman, and killed his own wife."(Season, 32).

With his imprisonment begins another episode of his life marked by failure, or what Mustafa Sa'eed himself calls "wanderlust," or vagabondage. "On coming out of prison he wanders from place to place, from Paris to Copenhagen to Delhi to Bangkok, as he tries to put off the decision. And after that the end came in an obscure village on the Nile"(Season, 69). The end is what the narrator witnesses during his stay in the village. Mustafa Sa'eed dies by drowning during an exceptional flood of the river. Another exceptional event follows his sudden death. When forced to remarry Wad Rayyes, an old man from the village, his widow Hosna Bint Mahmoud kills her new husband and commits suicide. This is also another kind of failure which the narrator underlines in an imaginary conversation with the dead Mustafa Sa'eed: "... Why did Hosna Bint Mahmoud kill the old man Wad Rayyes and then kill herself in this village where no one ever kills anyone?"(Season, 140).

While reading Season of Migration to the North, it may prove useful to draw parallels with other novels from the Muslim world, mainly with the examples of Cheikh Hamidou Kane's L'Aventure Ambiguë, Yahya Haqqi's The Saint's Lamp and also Mouloud Feraoun's La Terre et le Sang. The focal characters of these novels are shown going through two main stages marked, to start with, by a gradual crescendo towards success, and later, by a rapid downfall, a quick decrescendo leading to failure, a complete failure which is sometimes avoided when the hero agrees to undergo a period of purgatory after or during which he reintegrates his traditional milieu. This failure is manifest under several forms. For instance, Mustafa Sa'eed being ashamed

of or secret about his own past, the narrator and his kinsmen showing their disappointment as regards the role he was expected to play in the community, and consequently, a certain marginalization as outsider. With L'Aventure Ambiguë, Season of Migration to the North shares the same technique of the undoubling of the focal figure. Both Samba Diallo and Mihaimid realise that the place they were expected to occupy on their return has been usurped by someone else who is often presented as their double. With La Terre et le Sang, Season of Migration to the North has in common a perception of the sojourn overseas as being a mere parenthesis. Finally, as in The Saint's Lamp, there is a peculiar representation of European women and the foreign land, as well as a certain way in which the focal figure returns to his milieu after a serious psychological conflict. Both novels also show characters who are so affected by their stay overseas and the type of education they have received that their behaviour and personality are completely changed. For both Mihaimid and Ismail however, towards the last chapter of the novels, what is important is not the nature and importance of their achievement abroad, of their degree, but rather how successfully and how quickly they are restored to their milieu.

One for whom there has been no hope of returning to his original milieu is indeed the South African Ezekiel Mphahlele. In his novel The Wanderers he explains how he was led to flee South Africa. However he did not go overseas for studies.He went away because it was the only way for him to ensure the well-being his family. But although it is a voyage abroad Mphahlele, like Timi, his replica in the novel, does not go to Europe. The voyage takes place in Africa.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE URBAN OUTCASTS

THE WANDERERS

Like Peter Abrahams' A Wreath for Udomo and William Conton's The African, The Wanderers is not completely fictional but rather highly autobiographical and Ezekiel Mphahlele has not tried to disguise it. The place names pose no difficulty for the reader. We guess that Iboyoru, a contraction of the tribe names Ibo and Yoruba, stands for Nigeria, and that Lao Kiku is also the contraction of Luo and Kikuyu which stands for Kenya. Mphahlele also plays with events. It is Ghana that Mphahlele had actually in mind while writing the episode about the deposition of Komo Batsia. The latter's state visit to Indonesia is actually Nkrumah's visit to Peking, as Mphahlele reveals in his 'Africa in exile' (1982). It is fictional license that permits him to confuse places but, in reality it was Nkrumah's statue, which stood in front of Parliament House in Accra, which was toppled down during the coup. Though Mphahlele gives every character a fictional name, it is an easy task for the reader to make a correspondence with the real names of people Mphahlele actually knew. Emil for instance clearly represents Mphahlele's friend Ulli Beier, Awoonor, the Ghanaian Kofi Awoonor....

The novel is organised into four parts, book one (9-118), book two (119-166), book three (167-264), book four (265-314), and an epilogue, page 315. Book one is narrated from the point of view of Timi Tabane. At the time of narration, he is in his native South Africa where he works as political reporter and sub-editor of *Bongo* magazine, with the Englishman Steven Cartwright as editor. Book two takes Timi into the background and it is Steven Cartwright who observes Timi and does the whole of the narration. Book three reintegrates Timi into the narrative position, as he has just fled to Iboyoru (i.e. Nigeria), West Africa, for the first part of his exile, and he is also the narrator of book four which corresponds to his stay in Lao Kiku, East Africa (i.e. Kenya). Book one is by far the most dramatic and the most eventful part of the novel. Therefore we will devote more attention to the action of book one and give a brief account of what happens in the other books.

Section one corresponds to the period where the Tabanes are in Lao Kiku, East Africa. It is a report of how their son Felang got killed abroad in Zimbabwe as he was taking part in a guerilla action. For 'Bayo Ogunjimi Felang is half way through and he suggests that "He should [...] be dealt with as a social phenomenon, a symbolism for the children weighed down by the wrath of the apartheid'(The Wanderers,127). Ogunjimi then quotes a comment of the then Bishop Desmond Tutu who once observed that "[...] young

children learn hatred and bitterness when they sit at night and listen to their mothers telling them about the indignities they suffered during the day because they are black" (quoted by Ogunjimi, 1985, 127). Though Timi and Karabo think that he has not been exposed too long to the apartheid conditioning, we can nevertheless read in him a "latent revolt" resulting from the frustration-aggression psychological process:

> When he was four, Felang would stand and look at the long line of men and teenagers being led to the police station. 'Ntate, why are all those men arrested?' 'Because they don't have passes,' his father would reply. 'What is a pass?' 'You'll understand when you're bigger. Just now, only understand that the police are people we don't like. We spit when we see them. Let me see you spit!'.(The Wanderers, 241)

The narrator provides hints as to what is happening. He says for example that "Felang got killed" and that "Steve had left for London to work in the magazine section of a weekly" and, as he realises that mentioning the death of his son at this point of the narrative already constitutes some kind of anticipatory discourse, he concludes, "But I must start my narrative at the beginning". This episode of the death of Felang will be the main event of the last book of The Wanderers. The fact that Mphahlele mentions the death of his son twice - in section one of book one, and in the final sections of book four - is not merely a narrative technique that indicates the flashback that is used by Timi in order to look at his past years. It is also a device meant to suggest the cyclical character of the narration. Both Felang and Timi Tabane are samples that are meant to illustrate a plight that affects a multitude of black South Africans regardless of their age. In section two Timi Tabane returns to his beginnings in South Africa and starts the narration as he has just quit a teaching career, following his outspoken opposition to the Bantu Education Act.

> I joined *Bongo* magazine as a political reporter and sub-editor when I had become sick with teaching high school. The white government of South Africa had laid down that Negroes shall be taught only those things that would make them obedient followers of the white man's instructions. So I quit. I had never thought of making journalism my second love. It could not ever be. Still it seemed the nearest respectable thing for me to do for a living. I worked under Steven Cartwright, the editor.(The Wanderers, 11)

The reason for Timi's quitting a teaching career was the realisation that the kind of education black children were getting was nothing but a kind of conditioning and brainwashing organised by the white man for his own benefit and for the continuation of his rule. While explaining why he had to quit a career he had chosen, he suggests a parallel with the events that have marked the life of another important character, Steven Cartwright, who is

shown to act as Timi's literary double. In this line of thought he underlines that Steven Cartwright has also given up a promising career in engineering simply because he felt more fascinated by journalism. As Steven Cartwright says in a passage relating his own biography:

> I like journalism. I opted for it when I refused to practice engineering which would have paid twice as much and which offered higher and higher prospects for an executive position. I'm not sorry. And when magazine journalism came my way I jumped at it. I'm not sorry for it: it fulfills my creative urge. (The Wanderers, 130-1)

When a friend of Timi, Diliza, a doctor at the local hospital, comes and introduces Naledi it is the reporter that he has in mind. As he tells him, it is a story that *Bongo* should handle. Naledi is married to Rampa, but very soon after their marriage he disappeared, and has not been seen since. Naledi has heard rumours that Rampa was picked up 'without a pass', and carted off to one of the many 'farms' where convict labour had become in practice a form of slavery. Diliza suggests that *Bongo* send Timi to investigate. The monthly magazine has already uncovered a number of scandals - all involving the treatment of blacks by South African whites - and this should make a good 'story'. The paper provides him and Naledi with a car, small and concealable cameras, and identity papers. He makes his way to the potato farm at Goshen, and gets himself accepted for light work. He plays the game of extreme deference to the white farmer, manages to make contact with some of the farm prisoners, and in the end discovers that Naledi's husband was shanghaied to this farm, became ill - as a result of harsh treatment - and was hastily dismissed without medical aid: he died soon after. The story of Rampa, the subsequent inquiry and the journey that is undertaken by Timi and Naledi into other parts of South Africa constitute the canvas of the first book. Although the story of Rampa looks quite central to book one, it only serves the needs of Mphahlele who is concerned with the exposition of the evils of apartheid.

As Timi narrates in detail his expedition to Goshen, he often makes reference to a previous inquiry done by Hank, another journalist on *Bongo*, who got killed soon after his articles were released. This constitutes one of the other layers of the narrative, a story that appears in reported speech and to which Timi refers to as to a "refrain [that] came and receded somewhere on the frontier between waking and sleeping. It made its statement and I seemed to be subediting or recording it all over again" (The Wanderers, 18). In fact it corresponds to the previous work of one of *Bongo*'s reporters, Hank, who had gone to a farm called Doornvlei in Bethesda and did the report under the cover of a farmer. "He had returned with startling

photographs of half starved teenagers and adults in wretched sacks and in chains. Hank was found butchered on a street the other side of Corona, a week after the third and last installment of his report" (The Wanderers, 18). In actual fact, like Hank, Timi is sent by *Bongo* to a labour farm, Glendale Farm, has the opporunity to take plenty of photographs, and returns to publish a series of articles about convict labour. The only difference between him and Hank is that Timi is lucky enough to leave South Africa before he gets killed like him.

This explains that what appears in reported speech is the actual text of Hank's report, interspersed with passages in italics reproducing official communiques relating to the questions of pass-laws and labour-farms, such as are underlined in the report. Moreover we further realize that with his taking the case of Rampa, Timi treads in Hank's footsteps. In comparing his inquiry with that of Hank, Timi suggests that, beyond some striking similarities between him and Hank, his case is not unique. Many other black intellectuals in South Africa are confronted over and over with the realities of the apartheid system. The case of Rampa, like that of Felang referred to earlier, must also be read for its paradigmatic value. Therefore, we are asked to move from the subjective personal cases of people like Rampa, and Timi's son Felang, to an objectivated and more universal portrait of typical products of the apartheid system. As Ogunjimi 'Bayo writes, the case of Rampa is a journalistic pretext Mphahlele uses in order to unveil the South African politics of apartheid and the relationship between racism and labour economy in the country. It is only an archetype and a shortcut to what is happening to a multitude of others in South Africa. It is therefore true to say that the case of Rampa constitutes a convenient literary medium through which Mphahlele examines the various features of the apartheid system. But the motif of the journey *within* South Africa gradually gives way to that of the wandering *without* South Africa and all over Africa, from West to East, and later to the Western World. Therefore, if Rampa is a South African socio-cultural and political phenomenon, the same thing is true for Felang and Timi as well, though each of them shows a different degree of autonomy vis-à-vis the system. Rampa is shown to be one of its victims and as such he has no means of fighting it whatsoever. The same comment is also applicable to Timi who often describes himself as being an ineffective person.

The ineffectiveness of Timi Tabane is best seen in the kind of relationship he has with his neighbours, with the Indian landlord Mumshi Ram, or with Domingo, another coloured neighbour. The township tenants' daily life is best illustrated when Timi presents his neighbours. One of these is the old Papa Joas for example. When the latter tells him that the

world has changed so much that hope now lies in the hands of young and educated people, Timi cannot help the following comment:

> How right, I thought, and yet how oversimplified. How could I and my kind give our best when authority and the white public suspected, feared, and rejected us? And yet perhaps to know this, understand it, because one was enlightened was in itself a boon.(The Wanderers, 34)

After this conversation with Papa Joas, Timi gives a panorama of the various possibilities that are open to him, the various degrees of commitment that he can achieve in his community, or what he calls "the dilemma of the man of intellect," the impossibility for him to communicate with others. He is aware that although he is better placed to understand what is happening around him because of his education, he is nonetheless an ineffective and marginal being:

> Perhaps it was why it became so irksome to the man whom education had given the capacity to comprehend the outer reaches of of the poet's wasteland, to see things in a universal context. Because he realised that his perspective was irrelevant, even a luxury, while things mattered only in relation to the time and place that contained them; while time and place demanded the heroism that sent some to jail or to the grave or somewhere beyond the borders as refugees responding to the orders from the National Congress of Liberation.[...]
>
> I did not have the heroism to offer; yet I knew I would sooner or later be driven full tilt against the machine. Then again, my intellect would not let me be; it kept hankering after the outer worlds where it imagined it could function in peace and find self-fulfillment.(The Wanderers, 53-4)

What Timi feels is that he has become a marginal being, an outsider. As a man of intellect, he suffers twice. Once because he is unable to communicate with others who do not have his education. Communicating with his neighbours about the daily life of the township is one level of experience, and he suffers because he situates himself on another theoretical level, the level of the discussion with other intellectuals such as Diliza with whom he debates the current issues. As he admits

> For a long time to come, I was to continue puzzling over this tendency of the mind to leap far ahead of social realities. Was it part of the dilemma of the man of intellect who found he could no longer express his feelings and thoughts coherently to those who were unschooled or were semi-schooled? Was it in turn due to the fact that his learning had wrenched his speech from the basic metaphor and allegory of those who were still in touch with the basic realities, whether rural or urban, because such learning was couched in different sets of metaphor and allegory? Or was there right from the first a basic desire for the freedom of the mind which drifted as far

> from one's elementary needs as one's schooling drove it?(The Wanderers, 53-4)

Later in the novel as the Tabane family moves from Iboyoru to Lao Kiku, Felang's aggressiveness grows stronger until he runs away to join the freedom fighters to be killed later in the course of guerilla action. His death is to be seen as a by-product of the apartheid system which he is meant to be fighting.

With the case of Timi, the fight against apartheid is taken to another level. He is an intellectual who has already refused to contribute to the segregationist educational policies in South Africa by quitting a teaching career. By joining the editorial team of *Bongo* magazine, he contributes to the uncovering of scandalous issues involving the treatment of blacks by South African whites. Though the kind of work Timi does with *Bongo* is rewarding, as shown by the success of his report, he has the feeling, as he is told by his friend Diliza, that he is "writing stories for the rising black bourgeois middle class". And because both Timi and Diliza belong to this same middle class, they have the feeling of being trapped: "If you're educated you don't have the means to sustain your status, if you've more money than the average, you don't have the education to help move among the enlightened"(The Wanderers, 113). His outspoken opposition to the government Bantu Education Act, combined with the feeling of living in a claustrophobic atmosphere, makes him choose the only feasible alternative: exile. However, living in exile does not mean that he has given up the fight. Timi's untiring concern with educational issues indicates the new strategy he has chosen. As Ogunjimi indicates,

> Towards the end of the novel, Mphahlele seems to value more the essence of the budding generation in the revolutionary struggle. For him educational mobilization is vital. At a philosophical level he endeavours to inculcate the children with a more logical perception of the universe."(Ogunjimi, 1985, 123)

This aspect of Timi's personal anti-apartheid fight however is better developed in books three and four when he is most concerned with helping his son Felang to find his own way.

In book two there is no essentially dramatic movement in this part of the narrative since most of the events referred to have taken place before Timi's escape to Iboyoru. In the opening section of this book, Steve has just returned from a mission in the Dinokama-Streuben area. Incidentally it may be worth noting that, regardless of the exigencies of their profession, Timi in book one, Steven in book two, and Hank before them, all go on a mission that constitutes a pretext which allows the novelist to present the South African reality. While Timi goes to the countryside to report on the

nature of farm labour, Steve covers the urban type of violence that is generated by the apartheid system. When he goes to see Karabo, her silence about the whereabouts of her husband makes Steven guess that by now Timi must be hitch-hiking out of the country. As he says, "Twelve months was too long to wait for a passport that did not come.[...]. It became obvious that he had skipped the country, or was on his way to the border between South Africa and Botswana in the West."(The Wanderers, 122) Book one provides a view of events according to Timi Tabane, and book two complements it as the same events are seen under the eyes of Steven Cartwright. It is meant to serve as a retrospective on the succession of events that have led to Timi's going away, a retrospective that is meant to throw more light on the nature of the background Timi has not mentioned, and on the reasons that drove him out of South Africa.

In this retrospective, Steven is concerned with clarifying two issues which seem to be interrelated: the nature of his relationship to Timi and his relationship to Naledi, thus pointing to the existence of some deeper and unrevealed link between himself and Timi. As he says "I think he represented one side of me - the side I never wanted to acknowledge"(The Wanderers, 130). As concerns his relationship with Timi there are several indicators that show to what extent Steven Cartwright is meant to be the positive double of Timi Tabane. Beyond the technical device that makes both Timi and Steven responsible for the narration, we also notice that the reader is meant to understand that Steven and Timi are literary twins. Both of them have given up promising careers and have decided to devote their time and energy to journalism. Both are also subject to a similar disillusionment. Both also end up in exile, although in the case of Steven the departure is chosen, whereas Timi was more or less compelled to emigrate. In passing, we can also notice that they both are in love with the same woman, Naledi. Naledi, and then Steven eventually follow Timi's steps and decide to cross the border. Naledi writes to Steven and tells him that she and her family intend to cross the line into Botswana, whereas Steven acknowledges that he might follow Timi's example. As he says, "Something tells me I'm going to make a sudden decision to quit and go and make another start somewhere, far away from South Africa. It won't be long..."(The Wanderers, 166)

Book three corresponds to the period the Tabane spend in exile in Iboyoru. Timi is employed as a teacher in Sogali and lives in the Government Reservation Area. Two years after his arrival and one year after his family's, president Komo Batsia is overthrown. The next day after the coup d'état, Steven arrives in Iboyoru on vacation. Their being momentarily reunited is the occasion for Timi to look back and bring back his memories

of South Africa. He is also told that Steve and Naledi intend to marry. Later, Timi moves again northwards to take up another teaching job in Takora university where he meets Emil, a European exile who has a strong and genuine interest in Africa. Timi also has the opportunity to get acquainted with the other South African exiles living in Iboyoru. His problems worsen with the misbehaviour of Felang which constitutes a cause of growing concern. In the concluding lines of book four, Timi seems to underline the importance of failure in his life and the inevitability of wandering in exile. As he says in a letter to his Iboyoru friend Awoonor, "You see, once you have left your native shores, you continue to circle up there like a bird in a storm. Only, the storm is inside yourself this time. When I have thought things over, I may come back: but I suppose it must always be in terms other than my own...."(The Wanderers, 264)

In book four, the Tabanes are in Lao Kiku. The stay in this country of East Africa is largely marked by a growing concern with the well-being of Felang. Despite the efforts of his parents to give him the best education they can, he is more interested in his own independence than in his studies. After a few unsuccessful attempts to leave home, he finally joins a group of freedom fighters and gets killed in a guerilla action. In Lao Kiku, their friend Joe introduces them to local life and they get acquainted with another European character, Professor George Wingdon who has the same characteristics as Emil. As in Iboyoru, Timi realises here that the African is not really independent. As he says "Kambani, the capital, is a white man's city..."(The Wanderers, 281). Though he comes to the pessimistic conclusion that Kambani is not better than any city in South Africa, there is yet a touch of hope for in the last lines of book four we are told that "Karabo is carrying a new life in her."(The Wanderers, 312). Despite this optimistic note it nevertheless remains that Timi is wandering since he left his native South Africa. The boundaries of his forced voyage are those of the African continent.

If, for Timi, the wandering takes place on the scale of the continent, the same thing cannot be said of the urban characters depicted by Meja Mwangi. For them, the circle is much smaller as the voyage takes place within one country, from the countryside to the city, or within the city from one social class to another downwards.

GOING DOWN RIVER ROAD

The literary production of Meja Mwangi has so far followed three different directions; he has produced historical novels that have focused on the Mau Mau movement, and he has also written social or urban novels in

which he has described the plight of poor people in cities, in addition to a recent desire to turn to a more popular form of literature with a thriller.

Taste of Death (1975) and Carcase for Hounds (1974), of which a film has been made under the title of Cry Freedom[5], belong to the category of historical novels. They illustrate Meja Mwangi's concern with the Mau Mau episode. To him "Mau Mau is a very important episode in Kenya's history, and [he still feels] that so far not enough has been written about this crucial stage of [Kenya's] development."(Lindfors, 1970, 68). The narration in Taste of Death emerges from personal recollections of the Mau Mau Emergency era. Mwangi's childhood coincided with that period: "Everybody growing up at that time [...] couldn't help getting involved in it. [...] you couldn't just help feeling the tension of the conflict between the forest fighters and the colonial government. Everyone was caught up in this big movement."(Lindfors, 1979, 70). Carcase for Hounds (1974) is another novel devoted to the illustration of the colonial episode of Kenya.

Though published after Kill Me Quick (1973), Taste of Death (1975) is actually Mwangi's first novel. It is the history of Kariuki, a World War II soldier who joined the freedom fighters.In Taste of Death the existence of themes such as violence and prison already announce Mwangi's later emphasis on the oppressive urban environment. These urban novels are no longer concerned with the historical past of Kenya, but Mwangi now concentrates on contemporary issues. This is for example how he justifies the existence of Kill Me Quick which was awarded the 1974 Kenyatta Prize for Literature:

> In the early 1970's a number of my friends had just finished secondary school and couldn't find jobs. I felt it was important to tell their story, to show their plight in the city. I don't think anybody here had written anything about such people yet- about the hopes and aspirations of one who comes out of school and discovers desperation in the city. I felt that the problem of these people ought to be brought to the attention of the rest of the society.(Lindfors, 1979, 70)

As it is also described in Zell's A New Reader's Guide to African Literature the second major aspect of Mwangi's concern is evident in Kill Me Quick, namely his committed and sensitive response to the problems of the poor and downtrodden of his own generation:

> The two main characters are two young lads who have been to middle school through the sacrifices of their families and who believe they will get jobs in Nairobi and return home in glory. They soon realize the hopelessness of the situation and resort to begging, scrounging and eventually thieving to survive. One dies, the other embarks upon a career of crime.(Zell, 1983, 429)

Two more novels on the social problems of post-Independence Kenya have followed: Going Down River Road (1976) and The Cockroach Dance (1979). The

latter presents the revolt and despair of one Dusman Gonzaga. He lives among and identifies with the people of the slums against the bureaucracy of the controlling elite.

He has stated to Bernth Lindfors his refusal to write such popular novels as in the style of Maillu or Charles Mangua and although Meja Mwangi produced in 1979 a thriller entitled The Bushtrackers/The Bushrangers which is based on a screen-play by Gary Streiker, it focuses, as Knight indicates, on two game-rangers who become involved with a Mafia-organized team of poachers and protection racketeers. It is a fast-moving thriller that is topical, full of suspense and violence."(Knight, 1982, 156). A recently published thriller under the title Bread of Sorrow displays violence and crime of the type that we find in Going Down River Road, but it is of a more serious nature than the ordinary thriller as far as its subject matter is concerned.

Among Mwangi's seven novels we have chosen not to deal with the historical ones, the Mau Mau novels which were Meja Mwangi's own interpretation of Kenya's recent history. We are not dealing either with his thriller type novels. Our analysis will be restricted to Going Down River Road and Kill Me Quick.

The two narratives are complementary stories. Although Kill Me Quick already announces themes that are to be treated in Going Down River Road, we have deliberately chosen to focus on the latter and simply refer to Kill Me Quick in order to see the evolution of some particular themes. Both of them are illustrations of the focal figures' movement towards the city. But while Going Down River Road presents characters who are adults who resignedly submit to the laws of the urban system, Kill Me Quick starts at an earlier period. It focuses on the parallel and identical lives of two adolescents, Maina and Meja as they go to the city in search of well-paid jobs, equipped with their respective Second and First Division School Certificates.

As they arrive in the city, they gradually discover that society is a kind of rock against which they destroy themselves in fighting for survival. They realize that they can no longer shoulder the hopes of their expectant families. Their own expectations are systematically destroyed and they both end up, one after the other, living in the back streets and feeding on rotten and discarded food. After several attempts to get honest jobs they are left no choice but to have recourse to petty theft. In the subsequent chase Meja is first knocked down by a speeding car, spends six months in a hospital owing to his broken arm and leg, and is later taken to prison as he is returning from his village. In the meantime his friend Maina moves into the world of crime as he joins a gang led by someone who calls himself the Razor.

There he receives on-the-spot training that makes him a self-reliant thief, but also a regular client for the green van, a police van which regularly takes him and the others to the local prison in cell number Nine. As Meja and Maina are reunited by this green van some years later, Maina refers to this cell as "the den of the most crooked ruffians in the country. In this cell they are supposed to keep the hardest of the hard cases."(Kill Me Quick, 117).

Their being reunited in this prison cell indicates the extent to which they have become part and parcel of a larger mechanism. Number Nine is not only the prison cell where they serve their sentences but it becomes a meeting place where the occupants promise to meet each other at regular intervals. Despite this touch of slight humour, the emphasis is put on the propensity of the system to produce more Mejas and Mainas, thus suggesting a striking similarity with Driss Chraibi's Les Boucs.

Going Down River Road also suggests that Ben and Ocholla, as well as Wini, are the products of a system in which they have a paradigmatic value. The narration does not deal with Ben or Ocholla as such, but rather as representations of the downtrodden manual workers of the city.

Going Down River Road presents three main characters: Benjamin Wachira, referred to as Ben, his mate Ocholla who is a Luo, and Wini and her son Baby. The narration does not follow a straight chronological development as Ben makes several digressions to refer back to his past.

Ben used to be an army lieutenant in charge of a whole platoon which included sergeant Onesmus, referred to sometimes as One-Arse-Mess. During one of his tours of the local drinking places he is approached by one Mbugua, a member of a gang who needs a mortar in order to rob a bank. Without much hesitation, Ben agrees to provide him with weapon and shells in exchange for a sum of £5000. The deal however goes wrong and neither Ben nor his expectant platoon-men get the money. Mbugua and his gang are killed after mishandling the mortar which blows up in their faces, while Ben is injured in an unfortunate car accident in which the army car is written off. After a stay of two months in hospital Ben, like the rest of his platoon, is discharged by a military court for misappropriation of army material. Ben ends up in a poor area of Nairobi, after being dismissed from a cosy insurance job when his army antecedent is discovered. He then wanders from temporary job to temporary job and soon ends up a casual labourer on an Indian-owned construction site where he gets acquainted with another hand, Ocholla the Onyango, and meets again Onesmus. The latter is employed as truck driver by the Indian foreman Yussuf. Since the mortar business Onesmus has had a strong hatred for Ben. As they meet several times a day on the

construction site, he promises to kill the lieutenant as soon as he can. He does try several times, once charging him with his lorry, and another time emptying the lorry's load on a heap of gravel on which Ben was having a lunch-break nap. Although Ben has been carefully avoiding him, they inevitably meet again on a floor of the unfinished Development House with Mbugua's brother, a killer Onesmus has just indoctrinated against Ben. Later meeting on the ground, Ben and Onesmus fight savagely. It is only when a heavily loaded crane bucket accidentally falls on his lorry's cockpit that they finally get rid of Onesmus.

As a casual labourer with a desperately low income, he experiences the squalor of cheap lodgings in Grogan Road, poor eating-houses, bars, brothels, and dance halls. It is in one of those dance halls that he meets Wini, a prostitute and secretary with whom he quickly falls in love. As he is kicked out of Grogan Road, he moves in with her and her son Baby. Though he treats her as his wife, she despises him for she often spends her nights elsewhere with other customers, leaving him alone with Baby in her room. She soon abandons them both, elopes with her boss, and leaves a letter recommending that Baby be put in a charity home. Again expelled by the landlord and unable to leave the boy behind, Ben goes to Ocholla to share his shack, until the latter's family arrives.

In recounting the downfall of a focal figure who is downgraded to the lower end of the social scale, Going Down River Road constitutes a novel of internal exile and as such, compares quite usefully with two other cases which we have already studied, namely Driss Chraibi's Les Boucs and Ayi Kwei Armah's The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born, but it also recalls themes that are examined in Kill Me Quick.

Going Down River Road and Kill Me Quick are two illustrations of this cycle which starts at school - in the case of Meja and Maina - and sends the youngsters to the city in search of a well-paid job where they eventually become full-time delinquents or ordinary unqualified hands segregated into the shanty towns and the slums of the city. In the case of Going Down River Road the movement towards the city leads either towards unemployment or under-paid jobs such as hands' on the construction site. In the case of Kill Me Quick, the movement from the country to the city is illustrated in a more detailed way.

The novels reviewed above reflect a certain diversity. Some are as recent as 1976; one dates back as far as 1936, thus covering the expectations of several generations of Africans as concerns their contact with the West. They come from various regions of Africa - including the Maghreb which for our purpose is treated as part of Africa - and are written in two of the major colonial languages, i.e. English and French.

With the exception of authors like Meja Mwangi and Mphahlele, all the novelists treated here show focal figures who have had a more or less extended stay in the Western world at the end of which they return home.

Some of these focal figures are young while others are older. Some of them are relatively educated whereas in a few cases, the immigrant is totally illiterate. Incidentally, it seems that the degree of commonality is in a sense linked to the degree of literacy. The less educated figures tend to show an attachment to their communal environment, therefore remaining faithful to the mission that has been assigned to them at their departure.

For some of the focal figures, going overseas is merely the manifestation of a certain inquisitiveness. This can be read for instance in the amazement of Fara, in Ousmane Socé's Mirages de Paris, as he visits the historical monuments of the French capital. It is almost a question of touristic interest too because the primary reason for his voyage is to attend the World Fair. For others like Tanhoé Bertin of Un Nègre à Paris, the voyage abroad has connotations of an exploratory mission; his aim is to see by himself, to compare the European with the African, a mission that is less vital than that of other departing ones like Yalann Waldik in Les Boucs or Said in Topographie.

The latter are compelled to go to France because it is the only way to ensure their own survival and that of the family. It is the same target Samba Diallo had in mind in L'Aventure Ambiguë but his case, as the title of the novel implies, is more equivocal. The expectations are of two kinds: either the voyage is successful - then everybody will share in the ensuing success; or it is a "lame and impotent conclusion" that leaves the been-to in a state of non-accomplishment that alludes to the existence of some kind of danger in the crossing itself.

This is the predominant message of three other novels: Season of Migration to the North, Fragments, and Why Are We So Blest? Denouncing the

identity of views that was meant to exist between the departing one and his relatives, Ayi Kwei Armah depicts characters who oscillate between contact and repulsion, consciousness and madness, and for whom the relationship with their social environment is a conflictual one.

PART THREE: THE RITES OF PASSAGE

Introduction to Part Three

In the following chapters (six, seven, and eight), we propose to illustrate the cycle of the voyage overseas by an analysis of the process of departure, initiation and return. However, it will be shown that, instead of being the hero/insider who ventures forth in a world of wonder, and who comes back as hero/insider to be at the service of the community, the modern hero undergoes these rites of passage but with a different outcome.

Chapter six illustrates the first stage of this process, i.e. the phenomenon of departure. During this phase of separation, the hero lives in a world of common day, often referred to as being a well-ordered society, paying respect to its traditional values. This is indicated by the presence in the narratives of long-established rituals such as departure ceremonies, ritual scarifice, or homage to the saints, and of characters, mainly old ones, who represent the repository of wisdom and who act as the guardians of the traditions. While the departing one is seen, like the mythical hero, to embark upon a mysterious adventure, it is emphasised that there is an identity of views and expectations between him and his milieu.

Chapter seven is devoted to the stay overseas, or initiation period, which is believed to take place in a supernatural and mysterious world. World of spirits in which the stay is described as part of a ritual whereby the been-to, in the view of Armah, is transformed into a mere factor. Whenever the hero accepts this state of factorship, then the return is viewed as being successful.

The focus of chapter eight is the return period, a return which is viewed as a kind of rebirth, and the returning one a new, transfigured man with new means, new powers. Instead of this, he often becomes the "atypical" one, the unconforming one. After a scrutinising of the central values of his society, it becomes clear to him that he is bound to be an outcast, an outsider, for the values he stands for are systematically negated, a state that is transparent in the type of desert-related imagery that is associated in some novels with themes of putrescence and nausea.

As a consequence, as he is neither able to identify with anything in particular overseas, nor sense any belonging back home, he becomes subject to a repulsion/rejection as shown by the emergence of madmen, veterans, and other unbalanced characters who feel that they are the victims of an empty and meaningless cycle.

CHAPTER SIX: RITUAL CYCLES

EMERGENCE OF EXCEPTIONAL FIGURES

In this review of the theme of the exceptional figure in the African novels, it has appeared that the heroes exemplify a wide spectrum of expectations. The expectants range from the continent or the country down to the smaller scale of the tribe or even the family. Michael Udomo, like Kisimi Kamara for instance, feels a duty towards Panafrica specifically and Africa in general. For Samba Diallo, it is no longer a continental view; he tends to act as the spokesman of the traditional African and Muslim world, but what counts is the future of the Diallobé, that is the future of his own tribe. With Obi Okonkwo another restriction is added to the scope of concern. In going overseas, he is a son of Umuofia and his successful return is expected to benefit Umuofia, to defend Umuofia's interests against its neighbours. It is a smaller village, Wad Hamid, that constitutes the reference point for Mihaimid for whom the voyage abroad is a success only in so far as it is given official recognition by the village people. With the Maghrebine 'been-to', the duty shrinks towards the family cell. If Yalann Waldik or Said decide to emigrate it is because their parents are facing starvation. The same is also true with Meja and Maina.

The advancement of the African continent is the central objective of Michael Udomo in Peter Abrahams' A Wreath for Udomo. This novel is a story where the focal figure is presented as an exceptional figure who is destined to assume the functions of leadership despite his humble origins. Michael Udomo, is described as a person capable of unmatched personal achievements. His itinerary is somewhat typical of that of the heroes of the *Bildungsromans* and his story is, as Lanwood himself puts it,

> made up of the common experience of most of colonial students. The missionaries have picked up the brightest boy in a little village in Africa and set about educating him. Education had brought awareness. The boy had examined the world in which he was living and found it wanting by the very standards the missionaries had given him. He had turned against them then and struck out on his own. And he had luck- he had got to Europe and Canada and got a higher education.(Udomo, 22).

As soon as Udomo arrives and joins the group of African exiles in London, he quickly emerges as the driving force of men who used to form a group of dreamers. Before his coming, it was Tom Lanwood who was acting as the unifying force behind this group of African intellectuals in exile. Tom has now grown fat, is getting used to the pleasures of city life and he has

become the perfect image of a "prosperous West End clubman," an image which stands in sharp contrast with the stern face of the leader of men Udomo saw on one of Lanwood's photographs ten years earlier. Set against this declining figure of the ageing leader, Udomo emerges as the exceptional one. He quickly becomes the object of the group's "hero-worship". The gradual marginalisation of the inefficient old leader is set in parallel with the gradual rise to leadership - and to power - of the young Udomo. After his speech during the Progressive Party's debate, Udomo emerges as the leading figure of the group. As Lois sums it up

> He worked terribly hard, harder than all the rest of the group put together. He was the real force. His coming had affected the whole of the group. Before he came they had been a group of wishful dreamers. Now an organisation had come into being. And they had plans rather than dreams. And even Mhendi really believed again. He'd even stopped drinking. And though Tom was still the nominal leader, it was to him, Michael, that they all turned and his word carried most weight. And all in the space of six months. And *The Liberator*, that had started as something mad, now had subscribers from all over the world, for all it's being still stencilled. (Udomo, 112).

The emphasis on his exceptional personal achievements is underlined throughout the novel. He is also depicted as having a certain charisma. On the one hand Selina, the influential merchant he meets on the boat treats him as the saviour. She sees in him the only person capable of bringing a positive change to the colonial domination in Panafrica. On the other, he is the object of a campaign that promotes him to the role of the exceptional leader. On his arrival in Panafrica which was arranged by Adebhoy, the latter carefully builds up an image of a leader of men by organising a meeting between Udomo and a group of influential young men which turns to sheer propaganda.

Similar means are used for similar ends by Kisimi Kamara, the focal figure of The African, who travels to England for further education on a government grant. Like Udomo who shows an early interest in political issues - he had led that unsuccessful strike of francophone students - Kisimi also discovers in himself a precocious awareness of political matters as shown in his perception of tribal divisions for example. Like Udomo he feels the vocation of an organiser. As he says on his way to England, "I feel sure that if all the African students in the United Kingdom now could come together as students to think and act together, we could all have self-government in ten years."(The African, 41) Both of them are aware of their exceptional stature and destiny and they realise that their mission and debt are towards their respective countries:

> Samuel and I had both been aware of a mounting interest, during the last year together in Newcastle, in political developments back at home. We read avidly every word of the local papers which we had sent out to us, and often discussed far into the night what we considered to be the unsatisfactory progress being made by our political leaders in winning independence for Songhai, and what could be done to hasten matters up. [...] On our last night together, we pledged ourselves to work together as soon as possible after Samuel's return 'to free our beloved country from the shackles of imperialism and lead it into self-government'.(The African, 98-9)

Both Udomo and Kisimi Kamara entertain an idealised relationship with a mythical mother Africa. Udomo sees himself as the instrument of his country's liberation, eventually leading to the liberation of the entire African continent, including a special interest in South Africa. Likewise, Kisimi is determined

> to devote all my energies to politics, so that first in Songhai and then later, I hoped, throughout Africa, I could help free men from domination by people of other races... I would seek to give every black child within my reach the chance to prove himself, in favourable circumstances, no whit inferior to his counterparts of different pigmentation. (The African, 108-9).

As they both return to Africa on the successful completion of their studies, their respective ascent to Premiership is organised along the same lines. Both of them are the instruments of well orchestrated public-relations campaigns.

In L'Aventure Ambiguë, it is also the question of the collective welfare that determines the leaders of the Diallobé to prepare Samba Diallo for the exercise of spiritual power. But because he is shown to fail and to disappoint them, his failure can be interpreted in comparison with the relative success of Abala Stanley Mujungu, the focal figure Africa Answers Back. Both characters are shown to be exceptional, and this for various reasons. To begin with, a strong emphasis is laid on their royal origin. Samba Diallo is the son of the Knight and his early Koranic education is undertaken by his cousin the chief of the Diallobé and his influential aunt The Most Royal Lady who trust him to the care of Maitre Thîerno, the religious teacher of the Diallobé. As members of the ruling class they see in Samba Diallo the successor of either Thierno the spiritual guide or of the ageing chief who can no longer deal with the new issues facing his country.

Abala Stanley Mujungu is the son of Chief Ati, one of the prestigious tribal chiefs of the kingdom. He is educated by his father who does not hide that he is preparing him for succession. He sends him to the new school so that he can help him later in his choice of a suitable religion, and

therefore share power with him. In fact Chief Ati is faced with a choice the terms of which he does not fully understand. He relies on Mujungu to help him solve the mystery by learning of the white man's ways and religion. He will thus be able to help him as to which term of the choice is better for his people. Mujungu is therefore indirectly presented as the future leader for he takes part in the making of decisions which are to affect the future of the tribe.

Therefore, we can say that both Samba Diallo and Abala Stanley Mujungu are seen as future leaders. Both of them are destined to specific future occupations. If they are sent to the new school it is because both of them are future members of the élite and because, as The Most Royal Lady notes: "Il est bon qu'une fois encore l'élite précède"(L'Aventure, 47) ["it is well that once more the élite should lead the way"(Woods, 34)]. It is therefore not surprising that they have the feeling that they belong to the élite.

Not only are they considered as future leaders, but they are made to feel so as well. In other words they are educated accordingly. Various examples from both novels can be found to substantiate this statement. During his Koranic formation, for example, Samba Diallo is shown, like other disciples, begging for his food as part of the religious education they receive at the Glowing Hearth. But although he is dressed in rags and looks like the other children, the description makes it clear that they are not on an equal footing. As the narrator remarks in an interior monologue,

> lorsqu'il mendiait sa nourriture,... chacun, en lui apportant les restes pourris des repas lui manifestait par un signe ou par un geste que sous ses haillons, le pays reconnaissait et saluait déjà un de ses guides futurs... Il ne se passait pas de jour que quelqu'un ne fît de remarque sur la noblesse de son port, ou l'élégance racée de son maintien. (L'Aventure, 26-7)
>
> ["When he begged his food... everyone, in bringing him the half-spoiled remains of the family meals, would show by a sign or a gesture that under his rags the countryside recognized and was already saluting one of its future leaders.... Not a day passed that someone did not remark on the nobility of hid bearing or the elegance of his deportment..." (Woods, 16-7)]

On his way to school, Mujungu is the object of a similar distinctive treatment. He is not allowed to carry any of his luggage. The presence of the servants who accompany him proves his royal origin. Moreover, he makes an act of bravery by killing a lion on their way to school. And as mentioned later, he is taken on one occasion to the King who congratulates him for his courage and offers him, as a recompense, a complete village (after he killed a lion and presented its skin to the king, he "has become a member of the

King's order of Mutongole").

At school Samba Diallo and Mujungu receive preferential treatment. Reverend Hubert is clearly glad to have Mujungu among his African pupils. At the mission school, he is shown to make a distinction between him and the other boys: " When you find a boy like that, the Reverend tells one of the provosts, come to me and talk it over before you punish him. That's the kind of boy we like to have. We can't treat boys from good homes as we treat ordinary boys"(Africa, 130). It is therefore not surprising that, in order to punish Mujungu, the Reverend decides to keep him at school during the holidays. Not for the sake of keeping him there, but because he intends to use him as an intermediary and an interpreter on his evangelizing tour of the neighbouring villages. He probably thought that having a chief's son as emissary with him would help convert the indigenes.

Like the Reverend, Thierno has a special feeling for Samba Diallo. As he admits, "Seigneur, se peut-il que je me sois tant attaché à cet enfant? Ainsi, j'ai des préférences dans mon foyer..."(L'Aventure, 48) ["Lord, can it be that I am so much attached to this child? he prayed in his thought. "Then, at my hearth I have preferences"(Woods, 38)]. The novel significantly opens on the kind of punishment Thierno often submits Samba Diallo to. His main concern while teaching is that his disciples should recite the Koran in such a way that he could hear "the Word of God (flowing) pure and limpid" from their fervent lips. Especially from Samba Diallo's for Thierno is convinced that he is an exceptional boy.

This preferential treatment was already announced in the first chapter of the novel. During a visit he pays to the Knight, Thierno asks about the age of Samba and informs him that :

> Encore un an et il devra selon la loi, se mettre en quête de notre seigneur. Il me plairait d'être son guide dans cette randonnée. Voulez-vous?... L'année suivante en effet, Samba Diallo, conduit par sa mère, revenait au maître qui prit possession de lui corps et âme. Désormais et jusqu'à ce qu'il eût achevé ses humanités, il n'appartenait plus à sa famille. (L'Aventure, 22).
>
> ["In another year, according to he law, he must begin his quest for our Lord. I should like to be his guide along that road. Will you allow me? … So it happened that in the following year Samba Diallo, accompanied by his mother, went back to the teacher who took possession of him, body and soul. Henceforth, and until he would have completed his classical studies, he belonged no longer to his family." (Woods, 12)]

So was the intent of the Reverend on one of his visits to Chief Ati. In chapter one of part two of Africa Answers Back, we are told that "When Mujungu was about ten years old, the Reverend Mr Hubert made one of his rare visits to the Chief. Then the missionary said:

> 'I have come to you for this one urgent reason: we have started a school at which children are taught up-to-date ways of living. I want you to let your son attend the school too, so that he may understand the countries that are far from you. You know little; he will know more... I will teach the children to the best of my ability, and make them more valuable to Africa than they are today'. (Africa, 117-8).

If at a later stage they are shown to apply the children a personalised treatment, it is not for the same reasons. Reverend Hubert aims at the head of the tribe to ensure success for his evangelising mission. He knows, like the German doctors, that if Mujungu is converted, the rest of the tribe is likely to follow his example. This is why he invests so much effort in educating Mujungu to his own standards.

Thierno prefers Samba Diallo for other reasons. Because he recognizes his exceptional stature, he secretly hopes to form his successor. As he tells the Knight, "votre fils, je le crois, est de la graine dont le pays des Diallobé faisait ses maîtres... Et les maîtres des Diallobés étaient aussi les maîtres que le tiers du continent se choisissait pour guides sur la voie de Dieu en même temps que dans les affaires humaines." (L'Aventure, 22) ["Your son is, I know, of the seed from which the country of the Diallobé produces its masters.... And the masters of the Diallobé were also the masters whom one third of the continent chose as guides in the way of God, as well as in human affairs" (Woods, 12)]

When Samba is at the Glowing Hearth, Thierno admits that he admires the boy, despite his being excessively severe with him: "pendant que sa main menaçait, son regard avide admirait et son attention buvait la parole du garçonnet. Quelle pureté et quel miracle! Cet enfant, véritablement, était un don de Dieu... Le maître n'en avait jamais rencontré qui, autant que ce garçon et par toutes ses dispositions, attendît Dieu d'une telle âme." (L'Aventure, 15) ["But while his hand was threatening, his eager gaze was full of admiration, and his attention drank in the words the little boy spoke. What purity! What miracle! Truly, this child was a gift of God. The teacher had never encountered anyone who, as much as this child, and in all facets of his character, waited on God with such a spirit." (Woods, 5)]

At the mission school Mujungu stands as the undebated speaker who is able to argue with the prefects and who is allowed into the Reverend's office. As he refuses to get up early enough to attend the morning prayer, and is taken before the Reverend by the prefect, Mujungu is not impressed. Unlike the other boys who accept their punishment without balking, he talks back to the Reverend and the latter is so impressed by Mujungu's maturity that he

forgets to punish him. In his instruction to the prefect, he underlines the exceptional character of Mujungu :

> You'll have to watch that boy. He's a very sensitive boy. You heard what he said. Most of your complaints were undeserved except that he refused to go to bed after prayer-meeting. When you find a boy like that, come to me and talk it over before you punish him. That's the kind of boy we like to have. We can't treat boys from good homes as we treat ordinary boys. We have to change some of our rules, and regulate them according to the boys' attitude. (Africa, 130, emphasis mine)

Accordingly, Mujungu is the object of special attention. While the other boys go home during the school recess, the Reverend asks Mujungu to stay and gives him private tuition as a way of keeping him longer under his influence.

At the new school, Samba Diallo has had the opportunity to talk in private with the headteacher M. Lacroix. He is not treated as an ordinary boy but as the son of an influential man. We notice that in the classroom for instance,

> Jean se souvint que ce n'était pas par hasard qu'il était assis près de Samba Diallo... Le premier jour de leur arrivée, il avait voulu entrainer Georgette vers une table où il avait remarqué deux places inoccupées. M. N'Diaye était intervenu et les avait fait asseoir à la première table, près de Samba Diallo. (L'Aventure, 65)
>
> ["Then only did Jean remember that it was not by chance that he was sitting near Samba Diallo. He recalled that when he arrived he had wished to lead his sister to a table where there were two vacant places, as he had noticed. M. N'Diaye had intervened, and had them sit at the first table, next to Samba Diallo." (Woods, 53-4)]

By putting Jean and Samba together, he sets them apart from the rest of the class. In so doing, he recognizes that Samba (and Jean) have to be treated on a different footing from the rest of the class. As a result of this conditioning, Samba Diallo and Mujungu are shown to act according to what is expected from them. Demba acknowledges that Samba is a particularly gifted boy. As he tells him,

> sans toi, je sais que ma nourriture de la journée serait considérablement réduite. Nul, parmi tous les disciples du pays, ne sait autant que toi, en inspirant aux honnêtes gens une peur aussi salutaire d'Azraël, arracher à leur égoisme cette aumône dont nous vivons. Ce matin tu as atteint un tragique inégalable. (L'Aventure, 25).
>
> ["if it were not for you my food for the day would be considerably reduced. No one among the disciples of this countryside would know so well, by inspiring these folk with a salutary fear of Azrael, how to wrest from their selfishness the alms on which we live. This morning, in particular, you

have attained a peerless tragic art." (Woods, 15)]

Samba does things that others cannot do easily. So does Mujungu. While the other boys reluctantly obey their teachers, Mujungu who is the exception who fights back as we have seen previously with the episode of the morning prayer.

The building up of heroes of an exceptional stature culminates in their being inevitably endowed with a delicate mission: explanatory and survival mission. They therefore act as representatives of their own people. They are sent out on an exploratory task. They act as messengers who are assigned a particular contract which is to learn of the white man's ways. As Chief Ati tells the Reverend while referring to his son,

> He's the one who will learn your method, not I. He will learn whether you have told me the truth concerning the way your religion works in your country. He will read your Bible, your books, and translate to me the truth. I hope it coincides with what you have told me. Then only will I believe what you say. (Africa, 70)

Mujungu is therefore assigned the role of the intermediary, of the interpreter. It is for his father's needs that he is sent on this quest for truth about the white man's ways.

Samba Diallo does not only go overseas to learn about the ways of the foreigners but his quest for knowledge is more restrictive but equally specific. The Most Royal Lady asks him to go abroad in order to discover where the secret of the white man lies. However, if Chief Ati implies that the final choice is his ("then only will I believe what you say"), it is not the case of L'Aventure Ambiguë where the choice is already made.

However, between the moment they go away and the moment they return, drastic changes take place. This is why they are faced with a heavy responsibility: to make the right decisions, in times of crisis, which will determine the future and survival of their tribes, their countries, and their traditional worlds in general.

Samba Diallo is called back home after a highly symbolic event, the death of Thierno. The latter who was the spiritual guide of the Diallobé to whom people went for advice, disappears precisely at the moment where he was most needed. No Diallobé knew whether to choose the new or the traditional school. His death is also the sign that the Diallobé have given up. They have been invaded by foreign ways to which they have surrendered. The first form of surrender can be read in Demba's decision to alter the timetable of the Glowing Hearth so that those of the Diallobé who wanted to put their children at the new school could do so.

Recalling Samba Diallo is therefore the last resort to stop the 'obscene chaos' threatening the Diallobé world. As the madman thinks, "le maître des Diallobé n'était pas mort, bien qu'il eût été le témoin le plus constant de l'agonie du vieil homme, deux mois auparavant"(L'Aventure, 179) ["the teacher of the Diallobé was not dead, although he had been the most constant witness of the old man's last agonies, two months before"(Woods, 166)]. Although the others laugh at him when he addresses Samba Diallo as 'maître', the madman and the royal family secretly hope the traditional order will be saved by Samba's returning to his predestined function as guide of the Diallobé. As his father tells him in his letter

> Mon opinion est que tu reviennes. Peu importe que tu n'aies pas terminé tes études au terme que tu aurais voulu... Il est grand temps que tu reviennes pour réapprendre que Dieu n'est commensurable à rien... Je sais que l'Occident, où j'ai eu le tort de te pousser, a là-dessus une foi différente... que nous ne partageons pas... Et toi qui, d'une pensée vigoureuse, te hausses à la compréhension de Dieu et prétends le prendre en défaut, sais-tu seulement le chemin de la mosquée? (L'Aventure, 175-7)
>
> ["It is my opinion that you should return home. The fact that you will not have brought your studies to the end you would have wished is of little importance. It is high time that you should come back, to learn that God is not commensurable with anything ... I know that the Occident, to which I have been so wrong as to send you has a different faith on that score - a faith ... which we do not share.... And you who, from a vigorous thought, raise yourself to the understanding of God and claim to take Him in default, do you know only the road to the mosque?" (Woods, 162-4)]

In the words of the Knight, it is more important to preserve God than to learn the ways for survival. As we see, the original mission assigned to Samba Diallo is forgotten. It was thought that "l'école apprend aux hommes à lier le bois au bois... pour faire des édifices de bois"(L'Aventure, 19) ["the school only teaches men to join wood to wood - to make wooden buildings"(Woods, 9)] and Samba was sent to the white school and later abroad because "les hommes doivent apprendre à se construire des demeures qui résistent au temps"(L'Aventure, 21) ["men should learn to construct dwelling houses that resist the weather."(Woods, 11)]

Mujungu's going to school is not directly determined by the need for survival. As he later succeeds his deceased father, he is well aware of the advantages one could take from the European world in general. He admits that the teaching of the Reverend is useless and insists on the more positive role of science: "As it is," he tells the Reverend, "we have found that scientists can help us more than you can, even though they don't have the

same exalted thoughts that you do" (Africa, 263-4). A similar criticism is to be found in L'Aventure Ambiguë but it does not come from Samba Diallo. It originates from Lucienne Martial, the marxist daughter of the priest who invited Samba Diallo to his house in Paris; referring to the christian evangelizing mission in Africa, she asks him whether it was preferable to have sent priests or doctors to Africa.

Therefore Mujungu is concerned with the improvement of his kinsmen's everyday life; he is looking for ways that can help them in a positive manner. His choice proves to be the right one for, during the epidemic of smallpox, he has to take bold decisions. As he is told by the German doctor "if you initiate a change, your people will probably accept it more readily than if someone else does"(Africa, 246).

The sponsors of Obi Okonkwo too had in mind to find ways that would help them in their regular land conflicts with their neighbours. This, they thought, could be achieved in sending their most remarkable son overseas for studies. For Chinua Achebe, the exceptionality of Obi Okonkwo, in No Longer At Ease, is to be understood in a comparison with his grandfather Ogbuefi Okonkwo in Things Fall Apart. Ogbuefi Okonkwo shares with Udomo and Samba Diallo the fact that he is destined for great things. In fact he does become the most influential man in the village. With his grandson, Obi Okonkwo, it is no longer leadership that is the target; his parents and sponsors are more concerned with practical matters. The narration of Things Fall Apart starts with a description of Okonkwo and the emphasis on his exceptional stature. Chapter one significantly begins as follows:

> Okonkwo was well known through the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements. As a young man of eighteen he had brought honour to his village by throwing Amalinze the Cat... the great wrestler who for seven years was unbeaten from Umuofia to Mbaino (Things, 3).

From the outset Okonkwo is described as a man of prestige and other examples insist on his unparalleled record. In spite of the bad start he had in life owing to the debts left by his father Unoka, Okonkwo is not only the great wrestler described above but he is also a man of wealth. He has three wives and his compound is one of the biggest around. His farming is very successful and he is said to have already won two titles, a fact which classifies him among the elders and the respected men of the clan :

> Okonkwo was clearly cut out for great things. He was still young but he had won fame as the greatest wrestler in the nine villages. He was a wealthy farmer and had two barns full of yams, and he had just married his third wife. To crown it all, he had taken two titles and had shown incredible prowess in two inter-tribal wars. And so, although Okonkwo was still

> young, he was already one of the greatest men of his time. Age was respected among his people, but achievement was revered. As the elders said, if a child washed his hands he could eat with kings. Okonkwo had clearly washed his hands and so he ate with kings and elders. (Things, 7-8)

The esteem in which Ogbuefi Okonkwo is held is summed up by Arthur Ravenscroft when he writes that "Okonkwo is a great man because he has assiduously cultivated the energetic and aggressive qualities which tend to be most admired in Umuofia"(Ravenscroft A., 1969, 9). It is not gratuitous that Odogwu, one of the elders present at Obi's reception in Iguedo, remarks that he "is Ogbuefi Okonkwo come back. He is Okonkwo *kpom kwem*, exact, perfect."(No Longer, 53). In relation to this statement R.N. Okafor remarks:

> Ogbuefi Odogwu's statement is somewhat ambiguous... It is quite possible that (he) means that Obi is a re-incarnation of his grandfather Okonkwo. What is more likely, however, is that the old gentleman confounds two things in his mind - Obi as a reincarnation of Okonkwo, and his close resemblance to his illustrious forebear (Okafor, 1972, 222)

After comparing the returned hero with the great men of Umuofia's past, Odogwu comments:

> Today greatness has changed its tune. Titles are no longer great, neither are barns or large numbers of wives or children. Greatness is now in the things of the white man. And so we too have changed our tune. We are the first in all the nine villages to send our son to the white man's country. Greatness has belonged to Iguedo from ancient times.(No Longer, 55)

The old man in this passage refers to the personal exploit of Obi Okonkwo. In the eyes of his village people the latter is a hero returned from the land of the spirits, returning as a winner since he brings back a university degree and prospects of a better life. This view of the unusual stature of the hero is given in chapter one, before Obi goes away, when the narrator recalls the other welcome ceremony Obi was given by the Umuofia Progressive Union in Lagos. After an outline of the birth of the Umuofia Progressive Union and its scheme for sending young men overseas, we are told that

> The selection of the first candidate had not presented any difficulty to the Union. Obi was an obvious choice. At the age of twelve or thirteen, he had passed his Standard Six examination at the top of the whole province. Then he had won a scholarship to one of the best secondary schools in Eastern Nigeria. At the end of five years he passed the Cambridge School Certificate with distinction in all eight subjects. He was in fact a village celebrity and his name was regularly invoked at the mission-school where he had once been a pupil. (No Longer, 7-8).

As a way of underlining his outstanding record, the narrator also compares Obi Okonkwo to Joseph, a friend of his who obviously has been less successful than he was. The narration insists on their differences: "Joseph had not gone on to a secondary school because he was too old and his parents were poor. He had joined the Education Corps of the 82nd Division and, when the war ended, the clerical service of the Nigerian government."(No Longer, 14).

During their school period, Joseph did not have any remarkable achievements whereas he reminds Obi that "at the end of every term you were at the top of the class. You remember we used to call you 'Dictionary'?"(No Longer, 36). As a consequence of this remarkable background Obi Okonkwo is expected to show some evidence of his modern manliness as he returns from England. The rest of the narration shows how he is unable to reconcile two conflicting desires: his own and those of the group, therefore alienating himself from his family and tribe.

Mihaimid in Season of Migration to the North also experiences this feeling of alienation, but in his case, it is of a temporary effect. In this novel both Mihaimid and Mustafa Sa'eed are referred to as being exceptional figures. When he first meets Mustafa in the village, Mihaimid reminds him that he used to regard himself as the outstanding young man in the village (8), and that he had in those days a rather high opinion of himself. Mustafa Sa'eed is already a particular case by being an orphan who as he says had no sisters and no relatives. Moreover, he is an exceptionally gifted boy. The teachers at primary school regarded him as a prodigy and he himself refers to his brain as a wonderful machine. He is known therefore for his spectacular success at school. As one of his schoolmates confirms, he was "the most brilliant student of our day... He covered his period of education in the Sudan at one bound - as if he were having a race with time. ... He was the first Sudanese to be sent on a scholarship abroad. ... With a combination of admiration and spite we nicknamed him 'the black Englishman'."(Season, 51-3)

As a consequence of his spectacular achievements, they "were certain that Mustafa Sa'eed would make his mark... He was supposed to make his mark in the world of Commissioners and Mamurs" (54). He was also the first Sudanese to marry an English woman, and probably a rare case of an African ever to have achieved such academic successes. He studied law at Oxford University and was later appointed lecturer in economics at London University at the age of twenty-four. He was also well acquainted with influential people of

the period in London.

On his return to Sudan he settles in the village of Wad Hamid and becomes one of its most influential members. He is much respected by both the elders and the people and he has a say in the taking of the major decisions involving the future of the village, such as the organisation of the Irrigation Project or of the Agricultural Project Committee.

With the rest of the novels examined here, the accent is not on the exceptional character of the focal figures. All of them are ordinary persons. They have no education or almost none except for Meja and Maina: Yalann Waldik is a shoe-shine boy whose future prospects are dramatically limited, like those of Ben who is a labourer, or Meja and Maina who are ordinary schoolboys holding their second-class certificate. There is no indication about Said in Topographie but one can reasonably suppose that he was an unskilled hand too.

For the heroes in the novels of Ayi Kwei Armah for example the emphasis is rather on ordinariness. The Man of The Beautyful Ones regards himself as quite an ordinary man. He is singled out in contrast with what Armah calls the heroes of the gleam. Unlike Joseph Koomson for example, he has nothing to boast about. He is nameless and simply referred to as the Man. He is an ordinary clerk at the Railway Administration. He is entirely powerless and ineffective. There is nothing remarkable about him. The Man's ordinariness is singled out against the more outstanding figure of Joseph Koomson. The former is an ordinary man, an unsuited man, who is only a pedestrian. The latter is referred to as the suited man who lives in a far from ordinary house. Moreover, in contrast with the Man who has no distinctive name, Joseph Koomson is also known as "His Excellency Joseph Koomson, Minister Plenipotentiary, Member of the Presidential Commission, Hero of Socialist Labour". In Fragments, a similar contrast illustrates the relationship between the ordinary Baako Onipa and H.R.H. Brempong. Baako's appearance is undistinguished as opposed to that of Brempong who is also referred to as the man in a suit.

In the cases where the been-to is an educated person - as in Armah's Fragments or Mphahlele's The Wanderers for example - their degrees, although they represent a certain achievement, do not contribute towards making them exceptional. We have seen in fact how Baako's qualities become serious defects in a society that does not reward creative ideas. It is much the same with Timi Tabane who, despite being a good teacher, is forced to resign

from his teaching appointment, and is compelled to work with *Bongo* magazine, a journalistic job which he does not really like. In fact, this heightens in him the feeling of being totally ineffective so much that the only perspective left is exile.

Despite their not being remarkable ones, these figures are nevertheless the object of heavy expectations. For Yalann Waldik, Said, as well as Meja and Maina, the target is to ensure the survival of their respective families.

IDENTIFICATION: THE DEPARTING ONES AND THE GROUP HAVE IDENTICAL VIEWS

For the focal figures whom we have singled out, going overseas is far from being an individual action, but rather the outcome of a group decision; it is often financed and supported by the larger group. This is why the been-to is not free. He obeys a kind of predetermination. He is the object of a social contract. He is one of the parties of a covenant that ties him to the group. The travel expenses, like the grant and the maintenance costs, are often supported by the larger group as in the case of Obi Okonkwo for example. Therefore the been-to is often seen, not as a subject, but as an object, the instrument of a social will. As a consequence, the law of the group and its interests are supposed to determine the behaviour of the been-to, his success, and his return. In exchange, the group expects something in return. It expects the been-to to behave according to the necessities of the group.

The nature of this social contract can also be read in the various meanings of the ceremony which is often held before the departure. This ceremony is often the occasion for the relatives to express the interconnectedness between them and the departing ones. It is intended to make him conscious that he belongs to the group, and that these ties will be reinforced by his going away.

For the old Oudjo, Kocoumbo's father in Kocoumbo l'étudiant noir, the voyage was not thought of originally. But as time goes by, he notices that more and more people in the village go overseas. However, more than mimetism, what determines Oudjo to send the young Kocoumbo to France is the idea of collective benefit. Finally acknowledging that it would very much please his kinsmen if the boy went to France, the old Oudjo makes it clear that the opinion of the group, of the larger village, lies behind his sending his son overseas.

In The Saint's Lamp it is also the common will that allows Ismail to go to England. This is another case of parental sacrifice for, in order to allow his son to go and study ophthalmology in England, his father -Sheikh Rajab - consents to sell his dearest belongings:

> He knew that this solution to the problem would cost him from ten to fifteen pounds a month, not including the initial expenses of travel and special clothing for the cold climate of the North.... could he really afford to give him this large sum of money regularly every month? Even if he could, he thought, this would mean that the rest of the family would have to live in abject poverty and deprivation. And for how long? For six or seven years, and there are ups and downs in life. Fortune is fickle and might turn against him. From the announcement of evening prayers to that of the dawn prayers of the following day he did not sleep a wink; but during the short nap he had afterwards he heard a soft voice advising him to trust in God and go forward with His blessings...
> The father raised all the money he could, and the mother sold all her jewelry. With the proceeds the tickets were bought as well as the thick clothing which would be a protection against the cold of Europe."(The Saint's Lamp, 11-2).

In order to allow Ismail to go, the future of the whole family is mortgaged. No matter how heavy the sacrifice is, Cheikh Rajab gives it a transcendental interpretation: if it is to be done, let us trust in God, he says. Having invested so much he makes it clear that now Ismail has no choice. He must succeed at all costs, otherwise the whole family would suffer in its honour. As his father tells him, "We all want you, my son, to come back successful so that you will not bring shame upon our heads. You know that I am getting old and that I have made you the centre of all our hopes."(The Saint's Lamp, 13).

For the central figure of Feraoun's La Terre et le Sang the contract is even more specifically stated for it is clearly referred to as a deal, "un marché," with which Amer is later to disagree. Amer is asked to fulfil the dream of his parents; to him, it is a question of acquiring enough money to ensure the survival of his parents. They feel confident in sending him abroad because they trust in his qualities: "Il était jeune et robuste, avait fréquenté l'école, ne flanait pas à l'ouvrage. Il pouvait abandonner ses travaux kabyles, apprentissage ingrat, et aller gagner gros à l'usine... Ses parents avaient hâte d'avoir, eux aussi, leur 'absent', c'est-à-dire leur soutien". (La Terre, 16-17) ["He was young and robust, had gone to school and was not a lazy man. He could give up his Kabyle jobs, which were unproductive tasks, and go for better earnings in a factory... His parents too were eager to have their 'absent', that is their bread-winner"]. Amer is

the only hope of ensuring their survival; Kamouma and Kaci are left on their own since all their sons died very early. For Kamouma "C'était tout simple: il fallait élever Amer, en faire vite un homme qui pût se charger de ses vieux parents. Amer fut entouré de soins, dorloté non comme enfant unique mais comme source précieuse de quiétude future, de bonheur sénile et égoiste."(La Terre, 18) ["It was quite simple: she had to raise Amer quickly to be a man who could take care of his old parents. So Amer was the object of a great care, coddled not as a unique child but as a a precious source of future quietude, of senile and selfish happiness"]

Obi's going overseas too is the result of a collective will, as the group, here the Umuofia Progressive Union, deliberately invests in his education for the future benefit of the whole village. As mentioned in the first chapter, he is sent by the Umuofia Progressive Union who provided him with a grant to study in England. As we are told,

> Six or seven years ago, Umuofians abroad had formed their Union with the aim of collecting money to send some of their brighter young men to study in England. They taxed themselves mercilessly. The first scholarship... went to Obi Okonkwo... They wanted him to study law so that when he returned he would handle all their land cases against their neighbours.(No Longer, 7).

For the sponsors of Obi Okonkwo, this stands as kind of investment. It is not only a loan "to be repaid within four years of his return" (7), but for them, it meant contributing to and sharing in the glory of having a son of Umuofia in a "European post" as a senior civil servant. As the narrator rightfully underlines, "To home people (it) meant the return of the village boy who had made good in the town, and everyone expected to share in his good fortune"(No Longer, 125).

As it is to be understood from the preceding examples, there is a kind of deal or contract between the departing one and the remaining ones. In exchange for the consented sacrifice, the group expects in return to benefit in the been-to's future good fortune. As Baako puts it, those who have suffered "the special bereavement of the been-to's going away" are entitled to some kind of compensation. As Armah further develops the idea, the been-to is expected to act as a kind of intermediary. This half-way position is intrinsically uncomfortable for he exists only in so far as he brings back something tangible. One of the consequences of this position resides in the fact that the been-to is never consulted as a person. Although the existence of a contract implies that there are at least two parties, so far only one of them spells out its conditions.

TERMS OF THE MISSION

So far, what are the terms of the mission that the departing one is assigned? With novels such as Un Nègre à Paris or Kocoumbo l'étudiant noir, the mission is rather vague. In the case of Tanhoé Bertin, one can say that there is none. He goes overseas on his own terms. We are told how he is offered a plane ticket, and in the context of Un Nègre à Paris, it is not important who the sponsor is. The most important thing is that Tanhoé Bertin will be able to see Paris. To a certain extent he is like Fara in Ousmane Socé's Mirages de Paris for whom the voyage is justified only because he is going to see Paris. As the figure of the sponsor gradually becomes clearer however, the novelists give a gradually more elaborate formulation of the mission. Kocoumbo's father for instance says that it is good that his son will have the opportunity to learn the wisdom of the white man, and also his knowledge: he wonders whether the departing ones will be able, on their return, to build a plane like the one he saw before the departure of his son. With the Maghrebine novelists, the reasons for going overseas are more down to earth. Their protagonists are the classical type of emigrants who hope they will find a well paid job in France and be able to send enough money to their family. It is only with Samba Diallo in L'Aventure Ambiguë that the term 'survival' is mentioned for the first time. Even with Samba Diallo however, his mandators are not quite concerned with what I would call economic survival; they have in view a more spiritual form of survival as the novel is presented as an attempt to reconcile Western materialism with African spiritualism. Obi Okonkwo's sponsors are not concerned with survival either. Rather like Samba Diallo's aunt, The Most Royal Lady, their aim is to have a share in privileges. For her, the main reason for sending Samba Diallo to the foreign school and later to Paris is that she wants him, as member of the elite, to acquire whatever there is to acquire before anybody else does it. As she says, "it is well that once more the élite should lead the way. If there is a risk, they are the best prepared to cope successfully with it... If there is good to be drawn from it, they should be the first to acquire it" (Woods, 37). With Armah however, as with the other focal figures who are more educated, the entire process is being questioned. Armah's view of the voyage can be best seen in an analysis of the departure ceremony.

The basic idea behind the ritual ceremony is that the departed one will come back a new person. As his grandmother Naana reveals, there were dreams before returns, premature expectations. These are concentrated within the first chapter of Fragments in the ritual ceremony held before Baako's departure by his uncle Foli. For the latter, the departing one is only a

messenger. He is indeed going into another world, he will return a changed person, a charmed man. He will acquire wisdom and knowledge. But he is warned in advance that he has to share the benefits with the ones left behind. This is somewhat similar to the warning that Kisimi Kamara is given by his father before his departure to England. As he reports it, his father's letter tells him that

> ... I had now started to climb a palm tree which was high and difficult to climb; that many were watching my progress, and much ripe fruit was awaiting me on the successful completion of my climb. He ended with the warning that if I failed to reach the top, those watching me, both living and dead, would curse me for failing them. On the other hand, if I reached the top in order simply to gorge myself with fruit, I would surely become sick and and fall to the ground and die. But if I returned to my people to share with them the fruit of my labours, then all would sing my praise and thank me and honour those who had brought me to life. (The African, 21-2).

In a similar manner the prayer of Baako's departure ceremony underlines that on his return, he will be coming back a changed man, stronger and wiser. He is expected "to make us stronger, wiser, to guide us with your wisdom. Gain much from this going. Gain the wisdom to turn your back on the wisdom of Ananse[1]. Do not be persuaded you will fill your stomach faster if you do not have others' to fill.There are no humans who walk this earth alone."(Fragments, 4).

The formulation of these expectations is adorned with an early warning that reminds the departing one of his duty. The "hot desire impatient for his return," that is already present in this prayer, is also exemplified in Baako's double, H.R.H. Brempong. In other words, the latter is the model he should strive to imitate, rather than developing a sterile egotism and autonomy. Commenting on this ceremony, Derek Wright sees that

> the family exhorts the traveler to deny his own interests in order to further its own. Crassly, it identifies the two, presenting the homage paid to the cargo bringer as both a display of its own gains and an expression of awe-inspired love for him, when in reality its modern members consult and cater for his needs as little as they do those of the ancestors.(Wright, D, 1987, 177)

The expected outcome of expatriation can be gauged against the figure of another character in the novel: H.R.H. Brempong. Been-to himself, several times but for reasons different from Baako's, he gives the latter an extensive view of how a been-to should behave: "when a Ghanaian has had a chance to go abroad and is returning home, (it should) be clear from a distance he's a been-to coming back" (Fragments, 47). The outside signs of Brempong's successful return are the two good "German cars, right from the

factory, all fresh"(Fragments, 45) following him by ship, along with a freezing plant for his mother and various goods meant as gifts because in his mind "those at home must benefit from it too"(Fragments, 53). This is what the reader should understand behind the words of the prayer said by Foli at Baako's departure ceremony.

The presence of Naana during the ceremony however implies that there is a certain form of danger attached to the departure. This is why she watches the ceremony in order to make sure that every thing is performed according to the custom. For Naana this is all very clear. An omission in the ritual could have been fatal to Baako.According to her, a possible transgression of customs is not likely to come from Baako, but rather from his uncle Foli who, in leading the ceremony during which libations are poured. To make sure that the departed one returns, she scolds Foli when he tries to cheat the spirits by drinking far more than he pours for the libations. For her the circle would have been broken and the dead ones "would have been angry, and they would have turned their anger against him. He would have been destroyed"(Fragments, 8) This premonitory feeling is reinforced by the nature of her vision of the 'land of the ghosts' towards which she believes Baako is heading. This is why she "had made in (her) fear a hurried asking for protection over Baako's head"(Fragments, 11).

As it is revealed in the performance of the libation/departure ceremony he is the chosen one, the one who is given some kind of sacrificial death so that his return might bring good for the whole group. Such is the meaning of the libation ceremony over which Naana, watches with the eye of the ancestor who wants to make sure everything is done according to the traditional Akan rites. As she says :

> Everyone who goes returns. He will come. He will be changed, but we shall welcome him as the same. That is the circle... Nothing was left out before he was taken up into the sky to cross the sea and to go past the untouchable horizon itself. I watched everything that night... Nothing was left out. The uncle called upon the nephew the protection of the old ones gone before. The circle was not broken. The departed one will return. (Fragments, 3)

VOYAGE FEARED

The fears attached to the voyage are mainly twofold: first a physical danger that could affect the body of the traveler of which one extreme is illustrated in Topographie Idéale pour une Agression Caractérisée, then a danger of the soul. This is quite accurately summarised in La Terre et le Sang as the narrator says "avant la première guerre mondiale, les Kabyles commençaient à peine à découvrir la France... Seuls les plus hardis osaient traverser la mer, croyaient affronter de grands périls, acceptaient l'idée d'être damnés pour avoir vécu en pays chrétien...(La Terre, 50) ["one has to say that in these heroic times before the first world war the Kabyles had hardly started discovering France... Only the boldest dared to cross the sea, and were persuaded that they were heading for great perils, while they accepted the idea of being damned for having lived in a christian country"] To begin with, it is feared simply because a young traveler is going to a foreign and unknown land. In The Saint's Lamp for example, Ismail's parents represent the lands of abroad as the lands of the cold, and most of the money they raise goes towards purchasing warm clothing. This is echoed in Season of Migration to the North when the narrator refers to England as the country where life is stifled by the cold: "I felt as though a piece of ice was melting inside of me, as though I were some frozen substance on which the sun had shone - that life warmth of the tribe which I had lost for a time in a land whose fishes die of cold."(Season, 1). This land, Ismail's mother believes, was

> like the top of a flight of steps leading to a land covered with snow and inhabited by people who possessed the cunning and tricks of the devil. Fatima-al-Nabawiyya (Ismail's fiancée) was also frightened, having heard that in Europe women went about semi-naked and all excelled in subtlety and charm. If Ismail went there, she did not know what he would be like when he came back, that is if he ever did come back. (The Saint's Lamp, 12),

As a consequence, when the departing one is often recommended to keep away from the "uncircumcised infidels, as Bint Mahjoub would say in Season, it is implied that another form of danger is likely to affect the soul of the traveler.

In this passage are concentrated the fears linked with the voyage. To begin with, the mother's imagination refers to what is believed to be physically hostile in the lands of abroad. It is covered with snow and the cold is extreme. Her fears are not only justified by the dominantly cold climate. They are triggered by the belief that the people there are devilish. As a consequence, Ismail is advised on how to behave overseas:

> My advice to you, said the father, is to live abroad as you have lived here, observing strictly your religion. Once you become careless, you can never tell where this may lead you. We all want you, my son, to come back successful so that you will not bring shame upon our heads. Beware of European women: they are not for people like yourself, nor are you for their like.(The Saint's Lamp, 12-3)

The words of Ismail's father recommending him to keep away from, as Bint Majzoub would say, "these uncircumcised infidel(s)," i.e. European women, stress his determination to preserve his own customs. In letting Ismail's mother give her own perception of the voyage, Haqqi lays emphasis on the popular representation of European women in the traditional Arab world.

Tayeb Salih has expressed the premonitory feeling that Mustafa Sa'eed was going towards his fate. A similar fatality is said to preside over the destiny of Said in Topographie. As he narrates his adventures in Paris, the author multiplies the references to fate and death. It is true that Rachid Boudjedra consciously sends the focal figure to inescapable death, but instead of interpreting the novel as a simple pamphlet against emigration, it is best to read it as an illustration of the possible dangers faced by the traveler. While Rachid Boudjedra underlines the role of the laskars in that they are responsible for sending him to Paris, he says they gave him a false and idealized description of Paris. They knew beforehand that the passage was not without risks:

> Le malheureux! Il ne sait pas ce qui l'attend même s'il s'en est sorti cette fois-çi, il lui reste l'usine ... où il laissera sa peau... il finira par y perdre ses doigts, ses mains, ses jambes, son crâne, ses poumons,... et si ça ne lui plait pas, il peut toujours essayer un chantier où il aura tout le loisir de jouer au funambule jusqu'au jour où il chutera d'une grue, ses mains, gerçées par le gel, en avant, mais ne lui évitant pas de se fracasser la colonne vertébrale sur le béton qu'il a coulé lui-même la veille dans son désir de bien faire, de plaire au chef de chantier."(Topgraphie, 112-113)
>
> ["The wretched man! He does not know what is in store for him; even if he makes it this time, there is still the factory... where his life will be at risk... where he will eventually lose his fingers, his hands, his legs, his skull, his lungs... and if he is not too pleased, he can always try a construction site where he will be given the opportunity to play the tight-rope walker until one day, his hands chapped with frost, he will fall from a crane, inevitably smashing his spine to pieces on the concrete he casted the day before in his eagerness to do well, to please the overseer."]

In Topographie the journey of the peasant becomes an "Odyssée interminable"(135) ["endless Odyssey"]. He is referred to as the victim of a prophecy, of some dark forces, or "la victime des Dieux, accomplissant son destin, gravissant un chemin marqué d'indices funèbres" ["the victim of the Gods, accomplishing his destiny, following a steep path marked with gloomy signs."] He is the sacrificial victim of a tragedy which takes place in a closed universe, from which there is no exit. Although he is shown his way by a girl who appears like Ariadne - "le guidant d'une façon languide à travers des tunnels silencieux..." (Topographie, 153) ["like Ariadne guiding him with languor through silent tunnels..."] - he has the impression of being caught in a "dédale" ["maze"] ('dédale' meaning a network of narrow streets where the exit is difficult to find; pp. 116,180,184,197, 238), and sometimes in a trap (112, 124). This feeling is reinforced by the numerous references to his presence in a labyrinth (113,128, 173, 175, 212, 218) where the train of the underground takes the shape of a Minotaur. The ending of the traveler's peregrination proves that his fears were founded. He is savagely stabbed to death by a group of racist French hooligans as he is at last approaching his destination. There is indeed no such premeditation in Driss Chraibi's Les Boucs; Yalann Waldik, and the other 'boucs', are not killed during their stay in Paris. However, their situation is not any better than that of Said. If the emigrant of Topographie is killed within his first hours in Paris, Yalann Waldik in Les Boucs undergoes something similar to death. Not only has it not come up to his expectations, but he has been reduced to the state of plant or animal, living in a kind of closed and almost underground universe. The young Yalann Waldik who went to France has become a residual, a pariah, and has spent most of his time in prison.

In this respect, he is somewhat like Mustafa Sa'eed. The period the latter has spent in prison is not exactly perceived as a danger linked to his experience overseas; however another danger illustrated here is that of estrangement. As concerns the first form of the danger which might be called physical, it is reflected in the use of a desert-related imagery when he describes his voyage, an imagery which is also combined with morbid metaphors. In his narration, Mustafa Sa'eed often compares himself to a lonesome rider who travels from place to place. He is like an Arab nomad with his camels, or a sailor on a ship unaware of his destination. Witness for example what he says on his way to Cairo:

> The train journeyed off into the desert and for a while I thought of the town I had left behind me; it was like a mountain on which I had pitched my tent and in the morning I had taken up the pegs, saddled my camel and continued my travels. While we were in Wadi Haifa, I thought about Cairo,

> my brain picturing it as another mountain, larger in size, on which I would spend a night or two, after which I would continue the journey to yet another destination.(Season, 24)

The metaphor of the nomad riding his camel is often used when referring to Mustafa Sa'eed. Similar comparisons use the theme of the desert, the sea, and the hero even sometimes compares himself to an arrow. As he says: "Nothing whatsoever had happened except that the waterskin had distended further, the bowstring had become more taut. The arrow will shoot forth towards other unknown horizons"(Season, 28)

The same metaphor is curiously used at two moments. On his way to London, and also much later on his return to Sudan ("the string of the bow is drawn taut and the arrow must needs shoot forth" (27).). As suggested here by the image of the bow and arrow which shoot towards unknown horizons, their course, like that of Mustafa Sa'eed's life, is not to be controlled. It is like that of a "boat heading towards the rapids"(37).

Like the desert, the sea is mentioned by the hero as representing a no-where place, symbol of infinity and nothingness, but also of an uncontrollable destiny. The morbidity of the sea appears clearly in the following passage (as it can also be seen in the passage where the narrator swims in the Nile, pp.167-168):

> And when the sea swallowed up to the shore and the waves under the ship and the blue horizon encircled us, I immediately felt an overwhelming intimacy with the sea. I knew this green, infinite giant, as though it were going back and forth inside my ribs. The whole journey I savoured that feeling of being nowhere, alone, before and behind either eternity or nothingness. The surface of the sea when calm is another mirage, ever changing and shifting, ... Here, too, was a desert laid out in blue-green, calling me, calling me.(Season, 26-27)

In this passage Salih suggests that for Mustafa Sa'eed sea and desert are interchangeable. Like the nomad who feels completely at home in the desert, Mustafa is shown to feel a special intimacy with the sea as though it were part of him. This "feeling of being nowhere, alone, before or behind either eternity or nothingness" is similar to the feeling that can be experienced in the desert. The interchangeability of sea and desert is further suggested by the deliberately idiosyncratic use of the word "mirage" as in: "The surface of the sea when calm is another mirage, ever changing and shifting ... Here, too, was a desert laid out in blue-green, calling me, calling me". Without altering the meaning of the passage the sea is called a desert. In another passage where Ann Hammond is compared to a city, the image of the desert comes back again, the woman taking the shape of an oasis: "The city was transformed into an extraordinary woman, with her symbols and mysterious

calls, towards whom I drove my camels till their entrails ached and I myself almost died of yearning for her"(34). At other times the hero himself becomes a "thirsty desert, a wilderness of southern desires"(38), a "South that yearns for the North and ice"(30).

The juxtaposition of images evoking the desert with other images referring to the sea is meant to create the effect of an imminent danger towards which Mustafa Sa'eed is irrevocably heading. He clearly says that he has no control over the direction of the voyage and that he is like a boat caught in rapids, not only going towards unknown horizons, but also towards certain death. His being sentenced to prison in London does not come as a surprise, and one can say that, to a certain extent, even his accidental death was predictable. His constant reference to his behaviour as being motivated by some kind of revenge-disease, "a germ of contagion oozing from the body of the universe" (Season, 104), adds to the morbidity of the voyage and suggests that his return, far from being beneficial to the village, is rather harmful. His presence has upset the natural order of things, the cosmogony of the village. Not only does Mustafa die in mysterious circumstances, but other catastrophes follow his sudden death. His widow, forcefully married to the old Wad Rayyes, commits suicide after she kills her new husband on their 'nuit de noces'. People seem to think that he has brought to this village a "deadly germ of contagion" not unlike the one which, seven or more years ago, had provoked the deaths of Ann Hammond, Sheila Greenwood, Isabelle Seymour and Jane Morris (32). As he himself confesses, "the infection had stricken these women a thousand years ago, but I had stirred up the latent depths of the disease until it had got out of control and had killed"(Season, 34).

In Armah's novels too we can relate to the idea of some kind of disease that is believed to affect the been-to's mind abroad. Baako's grandmother Naana for instance mentions the existence of a possible danger - a notion of danger that is reinforced by the connoting images relating to figures of ghosts that go into the land of the spirits.

> Always there has been a danger in such departures... the danger of death, the death of the body, death of the soul alone on the sea that knows no ending, hanging in the endless sky where our highest hills are themselves too small, alone in opposite lands, lands of the ghosts, alone in the white men's lands.(Fragments, 5-6).

When, for instance, Juana is told by Efua about Baako's mental breakdown, it is underlined that there was nothing wrong with his body, but it was

rather with his mind. In Fragments however, this concept is not well developed. It is better formulated in Why Are We So Blest? where Armah links it to the existence of a harmful "European continuum". It has nothing to do with the physical wounds Solo receives in America. But in his words, the ones who go overseas also agree to be assimilated. As he confesses

> What is ordained for us I have not escaped - the fate of the 'évolué', the turning of the assimilated African, not into something creating its own life, but into an eater of crumbs in the house of slavery. Always, finding the growth itself too crude, too bloody a thing to contemplate lucidly, we plunge into justificatory hallucinations, creating in our minds saving spaces we know do not exist, will not exist, in our lives... Most needed the space only for the awkward period of growth. Afterwards, our goal achieved, the residue awarded us from the dining tables of our people's destroyers, we discard what we need no more and stand revealed in our mediocrity: tiny creatures of Europe's small-minded slavers, imitators of their huge-bodied American kin.(Why?, 84)

The so-called philanthropic schemes that take the Africans overseas to provide them with education, are viewed as being evil. For Modin these do not aim at the advancement of African people but are rather meant to keep them under constant domination. In his very attempt to escape this evil tradition, Modin eventually gets hurt as he is castrated in the desert by Westerners, half-way between Europe and black Africa.

As can be understood from the above section, there exists, in both Haqqi and Salih, a peculiar representation of the foreign land which is translated into stylistic oppositions between warmth and cold, sun and ice, tribe and outside, fertility and sterility, brokenness and continuity. When he comes back after his long absence, one of Mihaimid's reasons for satisfaction is a feeling of rootedness: "I feel a sense of stability, I feel that I am important, that I am continuous and integral. No I am not a stone thrown into the water but seed sown in a field" (Season, 5). It is as if during his absence he has been cut off from his natural soil. The period spent overseas is compared to an hibernating process. Along with the reference to the cold which freezes things and takes them to a state close to death, another repetition also indicates that the voyage is not without danger: it is that of the desert. Though Mustafa Sa'eed often compares himself to the nomad leading his camels across the desert, the outcome is always uncertain for one is never sure of the next step.

The case of Mustafa Sa'eed also serves to illustrate the other form of the danger, that of severe alienation. Though, on his return, he has managed to become a vital member of the village, he nevertheless remains a "Black

Englishman." The village man in him is only a temporary and day-time phenomenon. As soon as he gets home, he returns to his private study - a microcosm of the Western World - where he actually belongs. Furthermore, he is so estranged that even his wife - like the village people - admits after his death that he had been a total stranger to her during their married life.

Baako is also a total stranger to his family. In its view, he is only a cargo bringer whom it requires to fulfil his mission regardless of the danger ahead. It is only his grandmother Naana who is aware of this. Therefore, while the family performs a hasty departure ceremony, she watches that everything is done according to the customary ritual. To Naana - who acts as the grandparent, the representative of the ancestors - it is of an absolute necessity that the ceremony be correctly performed. In her belief, a going in one world is always a coming in another, a cycle that is similar to the phases of death and rebirth.

DEPARTURE CEREMONY

It is only with Amer-ou-Kaci, the young Kabyle sent to France by his father, that we can trace (in La Terre et le Sang) the presence of some elementary departure ceremony. Before he is allowed to leave, his father first makes sure that he is in good company. Moreover, he does not forget the traditional farewell code-word in which he trusts him to the care of the local saints and to his blessing. Calling the saints to watch over his son was only a natural thing to do for the foreign land is still the domain of the unknown. This is not only a manifestation of the anguish of departure but is more symptomatic of the way in which the Kabyles considered - and still do at the present time - travelling. In the popular belief, going away overseas was not as simple as one would imagine it. The foreign country was a land referred to as the uncertain, the land of the devil. And one of the worst things that could happen to the traveller is to die in a foreign country.

It is also in order to make sure that the departing one does not die abroad, i.e. returns, that Kocoumbo's father Oudjo insists on the importance of holding a ritual ceremony. We are told in Kocoumbo l'Etudiant Noir how

> une semaine avant de quitter le sol de ses aieux, un sacrifice s'imposait. On immola un chat noir aux mânes des ancêtres afin que le voyageur ne mourût point à l'étranger. 'Que ton crâne revienne blanchir sous nos plaines comme les os de l'aigle reviennent blanchir sur la terre. 'L'aigle plane au firmament, au front des dieux, mais sa carcasse se retrouve dans nos

> bois, avait répondu Kocoumbo.' Ce fut après avoir prononcé cette formule incantatoire que le jeune homme sentit son destin accompli.".(Kocoumbo, 34)
> ["A week before he left the land of his forefathers, a sacrifice had to be made. A black cat was sacrificed to the spirits of the ancestors so that the traveler wouldn't die abroad.- "May your skull come back to whiten in our plains as the eagle's bones fall back to whiten on earth" - "The eagle soars in the firmament, at the Gods forehead, but his carcass lands down in our woods answered Kocoumbo". It is only after pronouncing this spell-binding formula that the young man felt his fate was done"]

The symbolic sacrifice of a black cat and the spell-binding formula pronounced by both father and son are meant to protect the latter from certain risks linked with his going away and his staying abroad. These fears are expressed in other terms by his father who wonders whether Kocoumbo while overseas will be faithful to the religion and traditions of his forefathers.

A similar fear is shared by Obi's kinsmen on the day before his departure. Although everybody in the village is ready to acknowledge that Obi Okonkwo is extremely lucky to have the opportunity to go overseas, a close reading of No Longer at Ease can nevertheless disclose the presence of some kind of fear as concerns the passage overseas. During the ceremony Obi's parents organised in their house before his departure, the future "been-to" is warned by the Reverend Samuel Ikedi, chairman of the ceremony, against any form of misbehaviour; he recommends him to concentrate exclusively on his studies and not to run after European women. Mary, a friend of the family, is more specific than the Reverend for she points to a possible danger linked to the going to the White Man's Country:

> Leave me not behind Jesus, wait for me when I am going to the farm. Leave me not behind, wait for me when I am going to the market. Leave me not behind Jesus, wait for me when I am eating my food. Leave me not behind Jesus, wait for me when I am having my bath. Leave me not behind Jesus, wait for me when he is going to the White Man's Country. Leave him not behind Jesus, wait for him. "(No Longer, 11, emphasis mine)

Mary's asking for protection on Obi's head points to the current image of the foreign land in the popular imagery. The latter assimilates the foreign country with the land of the spirits. As one of the listeners at Obi's welcome reception says, it is known that "the white man's country must be very distant indeed"(50), and reacts in the following way to Obi's account of his journey:

> 'No land for a whole market week! In our folk stories a man gets to the land of the spirits when he has passed seven rivers, seven forests and seven hills. Without doubt, you have

> visited the land of spirits...'
> 'Indeed you have', my child, said another old man. 'Azik!' he called... 'bring us a kola nut to break for this child's return...'.(No Longer, 51).

In other words, Obi is seen as the "little child returning from wrestling in the spirit world"(51) and the welcome ceremony is meant to celebrate the fact that he has returned to Umuofia sound and safe. The reply of the old man is not dissimilar from that of Baako's grandmother Naana in Ayi Kwei Armah's Fragments who identified "the white men's lands" with the "lands of the ghosts". Not unlike her, the old man wants to make sure that the ritual ceremony is correctly performed. As Derek Wright explains,

> the undisturbed continuity of (the) cycle is paramount... (and) is maintained by the performance of ritual acts such as libation, prayer, sacrifice, and the offering of thanks. To honor the dead is to safeguard the living. Only by the flawless observance of these rites... can the cycle of death and rebirth, departure and return, be kept whole and in motion.(Wright D, 1985, 338-9)

Beyond the necessary compliance with traditional rites that govern the cycle of departure and return, the departure ceremonies reveal the nature of the existing expectations thus implying that, although the voyage is feared, it is nevertheless desired.

DESIRE OF THE VOYAGE

The desire or necessity to go overseas is motivated by various reasons. In the novels studied here, there are roughly four different groups, with totally different motivations. For some of the focal figures that are examined here, the voyage overseas is not motivated by anything in particular except the desire to travel. Some of these travellers are to be found in Un Nègre à Paris, and in Mirages de Paris. Others go overseas because they are in a desperate situation; they go into exile as in the case of Timi Tabane in The Wanderers, simply because they have no other choice. Others, like the North Africans of Les Boucs, La Terre et le Sang, and Topographie idéale pour une agression caractérisée, are obliged to go abroad because there is no employment in their country. In the preceding cases, we cannot decently talk of the desire being provoked. It is not a desire, but an absolute necessity. The word need is perhaps more adequate in relation to the last group of novels, in which the main reason to go overseas is the completion of further studies. This is true for Samba Diallo, Obi Okonkwo, Mihaimid, and to a certain extent for Udomo.

As opposed to what I would call the conventional type of migrants, the last group is composed of relatively educated focal figures. All of them have had a first contact with the West through the white school. Their being educated there in the language of the white has created in them the desire to go overseas. In general, we can find in these novels a similar itinerary. The focal figure first goes to the village school, a mission school in general, and then gradually moves away from the village to the city, and from the city to a foreign country. This process of being attracted to the foreign land is perhaps more evident in the case of the francophone novelists.

There are however various degrees of attraction. In the early African novels such as Kocoumbo, l'étudiant noir or Mirages de Paris, the reason for going overseas is quite vague. In the case of Fara, we are told that his strongest desire "était de voir cette France dont il avait, appris avec amour, la langue, l'histoire et la géographie"(Mirages, 15) ["was to see this France of which he had learned with love the language, history and geography"]. This is to be read as a direct consequence of the influence of school teaching. The image the young Africans had of France was mainly through their school books. In the case of Kocoumbo we are told how these are the object of a special veneration. He recounts how he carefully keeps catalogues of Parisian shops which make him dream of Paris which attracts him so strongly. His mother, while cleaning his room, does not dare to touch these books which allowed her son to understand the subtleties of the French language. For Kocoumbo "tout ce qui venait de Paris était considéré par elle avec un respect à la fois sacré et craintif"(Kocoumbo, 32) ["she considered anything that came from Paris with an altogether sacred and fearful respect"] Going to the white's school and reading Parisian catalogues have conditioned his young mind and the kind of veneration he has for anything that is French reveals how deeply his education has prepared him to go overseas.

A somewhat similar psychological process can be found in the case of Samba Diallo in Cheikh Hamidou Kane's L'Aventure Ambiguë. After he leaves the Glowing Hearth of the Koranic school to go to the school of M. Lacroix, Samba Diallo proves to be a brilliant pupil in the class of M. N'Diaye. For instance, when the teacher asks in which French department the town of Pau is situated, unlike everybody else in the class, he is able to answer: "Le département dont le chef-lieu est Pau est celui des Basses-Pyrénées. Pau est la ville où naquit Henri IV", answers Samba Diallo (L'Aventure, 65) ["The department of which Pau is the capital is the Basses-Pyrénées. Pau is the city in which Henry IV was born."(Woods, 53)]. Jean, who is from Pau, would not have given a better answer. Another manifestation of the education of

the foreign school is to be found in his reading of French literature, especially Les Pensées by Blaise Pascal. In a subsequent discussion with his father, he confesses that he is being influenced by his readings to such a point that, when he later refers to the pious character of his father, he says, "mon père ne vit pas, il prie...," and he wonders at the change that has taken place within him:

> Pourquoi ai-je pensé la prière et la vie en termes d'opposition? ... A coup sûr, nul autre dans cette maison ne l'aurait pensé ainsi. Moi seul pouvait avoir cette idée bizarre... Où donc ai-je pu la prendre? Cette idée m'est étrangère. L'étonnement dans lequel elle me met en est la preuve. (L'Aventure, 106-7).
>
> ["Why did I think of prayer and life in terms of opposition?... Certainly no one else in this house would have thought that way. I am the only one who could have this bizarre idea... Then where could I have got it? This idea is foreign to me. The astonishment in which it plunges me is proof of that. (Woods, 94-5)]

In so behaving Samba Diallo illustrates how successfully the training away from his custom has been achieved by the foreign school. It is exactly the same words that are used in Africa Answers Back by the Reverend when he tells the African children that he wants them to be "trained away from (their) African habits and towards Western ideals"(Africa, 136).

Although there is an evolution in the degree of consciousness from Fara in Mirages de Paris, to Samba Diallo, it is nevertheless true to say that the desire for departure has been provoked at an earlier stage during which African children were made to forget their own traditions and to absorb foreign ones. However we are not concerned here with the psychological process whereby traditional values give way to foreign ones, but rather with explaining why the departure is desired. As shown earlier, this desire is only the natural outcome of the type of education dispensed in Africa during colonial times. But behind this automatic response, various reasons motivate this movement to the North.

From the point of view of structure, the various novels reviewed here focus their plot on the lives of their respective focal figures. However, this is only illusory for these focal figures do not represent themselves exclusively. They, above all, stand as an illustration of a phenomenon that affects larger numbers. Topographie is not only the story of Saïd. Neither is L'Aventure Ambiguë the itinerary of Samba Diallo alone, nor is Fragments representative of Baako alone. Each of them stands in each individual country as an illustration of a widespread phenomenon . In so far as it is widespread, it indicates that some form of imitation has taken place among

the departing ones. It is this imitative behaviour that will be emphasized here with an examination of individual cases from the novels.

Imitation

While Oudjo was considering whether or not to send his son Kocoumbo abroad, he is struck by the behaviour of others, especially one neighbour of his. "Oudjo avait entendu dire qu'il allait envoyer son fils en France et qu'il avait déjà effectué toutes les démarches nécessaires"(Kocoumbo, 26) ["Oudjo had heard that he was going to send his son to France and that he had taken all the necessary steps"]. In a conversation with another neighbour, he acknowledges that more and more young ones were going to France, and as he mentioned it earlier, it was a natural thing among adolescents to imitate each other for, "l'on pouvait constater que chacun se piquait d'être en tout point semblable aux autres"(Kocoumbo, 24) ["one could see that each of them made it a point of pride to look exactly like the others"]. And on the wharf, before he embarks, it is said that Kocoumbo is not the exception: "ils étaient environ une dizaine à faire les cent pas" (Kocoumbo, 39) ["they were about ten of them walking up and down"].

Imitation is also one of the motives of Samba Diallo's going overseas, or at least of his going to the school of M. Lacroix, which is the same thing. While considering the terms of the choice, i.e. Koranic versus New school, reference is made by his family to the attitude of the majority: this imitative behaviour is well rendered in the vision the Knight had after he received the letter from the chief informing him of their decision concerning Samba Diallo. Regretting that the Diallobé are giving up he sees

> un point de notre globe (qui) brillait d'un éclat aveuglant comme si un foyer immense y eût été allumé. Au cœur de ce brasier, un groupement d'humains semblait se livrer à une incompréhensible et fantastique mimique d'adoration. Débouchant de partout, de profondes vallées d'ombres déversaient des flots d'être humains de toutes les couleurs, d'êtres qui, à mesure qu'ils approchaient du foyer, épousaient insensiblement le rythme ambiant et, sous l'effet de la lumière, perdaient leurs couleurs originales pour la teinte blafarde qui recouvrait tout alentour. (L'Aventure, 82)
> ["A spot on our globe was burning with a blinding brilliance, as if a fire had been lighted on an immense hearth. At the heart of this fierce light and heat a swarm of human beings seemed to be giving themselves over to an incomprehensible and fantastic mimicry of worship. Emerging from all sides, from deep valleys of shadow, floods of human creatures of all colors were pouring in; and in the measure of their approach to the hearth, these beings took up, insensibly, the rhythm which encompassed them, while under the effect of the light

> they lost their original colors, which gave way to the wan tint that filled the air roundabout.(Woods, 70)]

The human beings described in this vision are shown to observe some kind of group procession or ritual in which any form of individual will is excluded. It is as if they followed each other against their own will. These human beings seem to lose their original colour and to take the prevailing wan tint. This metaphor stands for the fact that everybody is imitating everybody else, following each other like sheep. However, we do not wish to embark upon the critical aspect of the Knight's vision as it will be dealt with later. Suffice it for the present to underline their imitative behaviour, attracted as they are by the light like a swarm of flies.

In the novels of Rachid Boudjedra, Tayeb Salih or Ayi Kwei Armah, the process of imitation is not singled out as such. Boudjedra, by setting a negative conclusion to Topographie, where the been-to does not return because he is murdered in the underground in Paris, aims at discouraging other would-be emigrants from going overseas. By showing the dangers linked with the voyage, the author urges the others not to imitate the fate of Said. However, if he feels the need to criticize this kind of voyage, it is mainly after noticing that it has taken the proportions of a mass phenomenon. Such a phenomenon is well illustrated in other Maghrebine novels referred to here, namely Les Boucs and La Terre et le Sang. In the latter, Mouloud Feraoun indicates how the desire to go to France spread in the village of Ighil Nezman. At the beginning, i.e. before the first World War, only a few brave ones dared to cross the sea. After all, France was still an unknown land for the average Kabyle peasant. But as the conditions of living at home gradually became more difficult, and as the returning ones showed signs of success - they brought back more money than those who had stayed in the country - the young ones were encouraged to imitate them. In the village of Ighil Nezman, it became only natural that each family should have its absent member. The Algerians referred to in Les Boucs are ready to emigrate to France by the thousands. Witness this conversation between Yalann Waldik and the surveyor Dupont:

> '100 000 dit vivement Dupont. Et il en arrive tous les jours par paquets... Ecoutez, vous qui étiez en Algérie il n'y a pas longtemps, est-ce que vous croyez qu'ils vont tous venir ici?...'. 'Oui, tous, dit Waldik. 'Tous les jeunes qui ont des bras, un ventre et une vie et qui veulent travailler et que la misère chasse et qui ont grandi dans la foi en la France et qui ne veulent pas désespérer et qui ne veulent pas mourir.' (Les Boucs,122).
>
> ["100 000, said Dupont sharply. 'And they keep on coming by the bundle, and I'm sick and tired of it.' ... Listen,' he said vehemently, 'You were in Algeria just a short while ago.

> Do you think they're all going to come to France?... 'Yes, all of them,' said Waldik. 'Every young man with a pair of arms, guts and life that wants to find work and is fed up with misery and has grown up with faith in France and doesn't want to lose all hope and doesn't want to die'."(Harter,77-78)]

Baako's mother Efua, while disclosing her fears to Juana about her son's return, indirectly points to the fact that he is neither the first one to go abroad nor the only one who does not want to return. In her own words, she wonders what there is abroad "that so many of our young people go there and do not want to return"(Fragments, 11, emphasis mine). Again when his family accompanied him to the airport on the day of his departure, Naana noticed "the line of people, many white people, but also others who were black, go ... into the airplane"(Fragments, 11). On his return, the first person he wants to see, Fifi Williams, is identified by the taxi driver as a "young been to," thus suggesting there exits a group of 'been-to's' as being distinct from the rest of the population.

Obi too is said to belong to a distinct group among the Umuofians. As the story is told in retrospect we learn that he is only the local precursor of a collective movement that has been initiated by the Umuofia Progressive Union. As he himself notes after his return, "Nowadays going to England has become as commonplace as going down the village stream" (46). Reverend Samuel Ikedi also mentions at Obi's departure ceremony that he has personally met other young men from other towns who have gone overseas. There is also another indication that Obi's case is not an isolated one. It is the official existence of the Scholarship Board where Obi now works. The amount of applications and the number of the various attempts to bribe him reveals how many people are aspiring to go overseas.

A reading of Tayeb Salih's Season of Migration to the North does not show whether or not the author is preoccupied with the development of a particular emphasis on the phenomenon of imitation. However, if we consider the age gap between the narrator and the hero, we deduce that the narrator went thirty years after Mustafa Sa'eed did. Another example clarifies the issue further: recalling Mustafa, the Mamur indicates that "he was the first Sudanese to be sent on a scholarship abroad"(Season, 52), implying therefore that there were many more to follow.

Collective good and benefit.

With the group of focal figures we have referred to as travellers, there is no specific expectation as to the departure. Tanhoé Bertin of Un Nègre à Paris for example travels on his own terms and for his own benefit. There is no mission assigned to him other than one of a large concern. For Fara too,

going to Paris is a mere voyage, in order to visit the Universal Exposition. The voyage starts taking a precise meaning when the existence of a contract is hinted at, a mission binding the focal figure to the ones left behind. This the case of Yalann Waldik, Ben Ocholla, Amer-ou-Kaci, Said, Samba Diallo, Baako, and Udomo. One assumption however is that the nature of these expectations varies according to whether the hero feels that he is a communal man or an urban one. With the communal ones, like Yalann Waldik for example, the recurrence of the figure of the father symbolizes the awareness of a mission. This parental figure gradually disappears when seen with the eyes of Ben Ocholla in Going Down River Road for example. The case becomes even more individualised in The Wanderers where the only mission felt by Timi Tabane is towards his restricted family. This parental figure is sometimes given a particular treatment when it is identified with the country or the continent as a whole as in A Wreath for Udomo and in The Beautyful Ones.

Going abroad for Yalann is a huge promise of a better life. As he reveals after his conversation with the priest in Bône, he was so impressed that he made up his mind very quickly:

> 'Considère, mon enfant, ... Si tu étais en France, tu apprendrais dejà le latin et le grec et dans dix ans tu serais un homme.' Longtemps, le petit Berbère le regarda stupéfait. Pour la première fois il calcula, supputa, supposa. Puis il ferma sa boite de cireur comme on ferme la porte d'un passé - et s'en alla. Il persuada son père de vendre son dernier bouc, lui expliquant qu'avec le prix de ce bouc il en pourrait acheter mille dans dix ans. Et il s'embarqua vers la France." (Les Boucs, 193-194).
>
> ['Just think, my child' he said, 'if you were in France, you would already be learning Latin and Greek, and in ten years you would be a man'. The little Berber looked at him, stupified. For the first time, he calculated, reckoned, and speculated. Then he closed his shoeshine box as one closes the door to the past, and he went out on his way. He persuaded his father to sell his last goat by telling him that with the price of this single goat he could buy him a thousand, in ten years' time. And he left for France." (Harter, 123)"]

The promise and its realisation are associated with the figure of the father. It is he who consents to sacrifice his last ram so that, he is promised, he will be able to buy a thousand in ten years' time. For this reason, there is a kind of obsession with the parental figures (father and mother) throughout the novel, reminding Yalann that if he is in France, it is on some kind of mission.

A similar idea of a contract or even a deal pervades La Terre et le Sang for Amer's parents are expecting many returns in exchange for the exceptional care they have showed him during his childhood.

Similarly it is mentioned in Topographie that Saïd "avait le courage de partir pour travailler et envoyer de l'argent à une famille nombreuse composée des aïeux, des parents, des enfants, des tantes, des cousins, des sœurs, etc..." (Topographie, 158) ["he had the courage to leave and work in order to send money to a huge family composed of the grand-parents, the parents, the children, the aunts, the cousins, the sisters, etc..."]. It is because of this necessity that they cross the sea to look for a job. The narrator points elsewhere to the bureaucracy Saïd has had to face before being allowed out of the country. For Yalann Waldik, Amer-ou-Kaci and Saïd, going abroad is motivated by a need for survival. Unable to find any form of employment or income in their homelands, they are the hungry ones who are forced to emigrate in order to ensure the survival of their families.

Physically speaking the hero goes abroad alone; but on a psychological level, the whole family goes with him. This is why we find in Les Boucs for instance the recurrence of this obsessive parental figure watching the progress of Yalann Waldik in Paris (although this points to an evaluation of the outcome of expatriation which will be dealt with at a later stage under the form of the unsuccessful return). The same is true for Amer-ou-Kaci who, when he returns to his village, reads "un vague reproche même dans les choses"(La Terre, 9) [a vague reproach in every thing]. In the novels of Meja Mwangi - despite the fact that there is no expatriation as such, as the heroes of Going Down River Road or Kill Me Quick do not go overseas - we can also read the presence of a parental figure which symbolizes the mission of the departing ones and the expectations of the ones left behind. When Meja and Maina think of their parents, they are aware that they have taken their share of their wealth, and that, as Meja says "(I still) owe them something and can't just walk home"(Kill Me Quick, 28). Maina has the feeling that he has mortgaged his parents' future. Therefore,

> They would not want me back there even though they might not say it. I would only increase their misery. I would only go back if I got a job. then I would buy a blanket for my father, an overcoat for my mother and go back to them to tell them I am still alive. Believe me or not, until I get a job, I might as well be dead. It is no use being alive if I cannot help them. I know this because my father told me. You might think he is cruel, but knowing the conditions at home, you would think otherwise. (Kill Me Quick, 28)

In his mind it is natural that his parents should nourish such expectations. In a passage where they both compare their itineraries which prove to be identical, Maina tells Meja how he was the "wormest of book-worms at school"(Kill Me Quick, 2), thus spending twelve years there while the fees were being paid by his poor parents. In his view he is entitled to draw some benefit from the city owing to the importance of the sacrifice; otherwise he says he could have become a farmer and stayed at home like most of the other village boys: "Imagine how my friends who never went to school and always stayed at home will laugh! he says. I believe that I have a right to something better if only for the effort I put into those examination weeks"(Kill Me Quick, 3).

This determination to earn a well deserved living is also backed by an existing social pressure. Not only would friends left at home laugh at him, but the parents have a right to their expectations as well. Because of the pressure of such a contract Meja and Maina are scared by the perspective of an unsuccessful return. Shame and the constant presence of a parental figure in their minds compel the two youngsters to stay in the city and accept any job. As they are in farm, slaving themselves for half an adult's pay from sunrise till sunset, they remember their family :

> Meja sometimes remembered his family. At times he did so with bitter regret and longing and at times with amused detachment. He wanted to write or go back to his people, but he did not know what to say in the letter. The prospects of facing his family after the back streets life were not very bright either. They were still waiting to hear from him, he felt, but he could never dream of accumulating the necessary money to satisfy their needs. Not at the rate at which it was coming in.
> The sixty shillings they were paid each month was hardly enough to exist on. But by scaling his needs almost to the level of starvation, he did manage to save at least one pound every month. His family would need at least twenty times that amount for their daily needs each month. That to Meja meant that they were living at minus twenty pounds every month. (Kill Me Quick, 22).

Another type of parental figure, here a larger one that includes the Royal family and even the Diallobé in general, is suggested to be watching Samba Diallo. Before he goes to Paris, he is told by his aunt that his mission is to discover the secret for the white man's supremacy, in order to ensure the survival of the ruling class of the Diallobé. According to her, sending the sons of the Diallobé to the new school, and later abroad, is the best form of investment, some kind of life-insurance: "mon avis à moi... c'est que nos meilleures graines et nos champs les plus chers ce sont nos

enfants"(L'Aventure, 57-8) ["my opinion... is that our best seeds and our dearest fields - those are our children."(Woods, 47)]. What she means is that the élite and later the children of the Diallobé should be taught the skills of the white man, i.e. "lier le bois au bois". But the imperative character of Samba Diallo's mission is best expressed by his father. For the latter, his son must succeed at all costs, on pain of facing and bringing celestial wrath and the Apocalypse.

> 'J'ai mis mon fils à votre école et j'ai prié Dieu de nous sauver tous, vous et nous.... J'ai mis mon fils à l'école parce que l'extérieur que vous avez arrêté nous envahissait lentement et nous détruisait. Apprenez-lui à arrêter l'extérieur....
> 'Cet avenir, je l'accepte. Mon fils en est le gage. Il contribuera à le bâtir. Je veux qu'il y contribue, non plus en étranger venu des lointains, mais en artisan responsable des destinées de la cité.'(L'Aventure, 91-2)
> ['I have sent my son to your school, and I have prayed God to save us all, you and us....I have sent my son to the school because the external which you have checked was slowly seeping through us and destroying us. Teach him to check the external....
> 'This future - I accept it. My son is the pledge of that. He will contribute to its building. It is my wish that he contribute, not as a stranger come from distant regions, but as an artisan responsible for the destinies of the citadel.'(Woods,79-80)]

The promises held by the departure of Samba Diallo are similar to those held by the coming of a new-born; everything is organised around him, the baby acting as the centre of interest. As the Knight tells M. Lacroix, "la fin du monde est arrivée pour chacun de nous, car nul ne peut plus vivre de la seule préservation de soi. Mais, de nos longs mûrissements multiples, il va naître un fils au monde. Le premier fils de la terre. L'unique aussi"(L'Aventure, 92) ["the end of the world has indeed come for every one of us, because no one can any longer live by the simple carrying out of what he himself is. But from our long and varied ripenings a son will be born to the world: the first son of the earth; the only one also."(Woods, 80)].

The idea that the departed one will come back a new person, like a new-born to the world is developed by Baako's grandmother Naana. Talking about the family's expectations, the "dreams before returns" too heavy for the spirit of the returning ones, she asks: "but what is a traveler just returned from far journeys started years ago if not a new one all again?" (Fragments, 3). With her question, she refers to the Akan concept of the cycle of departure and return according to which "a going in one world is always a coming in another" (Wright D., 1985, 338). The dreams Naana refers to constitute the expectations, the promises held by the been-to's return.

These are concentrated within the first chapter of Fragments in the grandmother's evaluation of the ritual ceremony held before Baako's departure.

Above all, if the voyage abroad is desired, it is mainly because it conveys the promise of a better life. As Obi reflects, if so many school-leavers struggle to go overseas it is in order to get a university degree which, according to the narrator

> was the philosospher's stone. It transmuted a third-class clerk on one hundred and fifty a year into a senior civil servant on five hundred and seventy, with car and luxuriously furnished quarters at nominal rent. And the disparity in salary did not tell even half the story. To occupy a "European post" was second to actually being a European. It raised a man from the masses to the élite whose small talk at cocktail parties was: 'How's the car behaving?'. (No Longer, 92).

Within a period of four to five years, the "been-to" is transformed into a senior civil servant occupying a "European post" with all the advantages that go with the function. In the popular opinion, this change of status seems to be the ultimate aim of going overseas. However the reactions of the various characters in No Longer at Ease throw light on the other functions of departure and what it is expected to yield.

Behind that lies the concept of a kind of social mission or contract. Not only has Obi to pay the Umuofia Progressive Union back within a period of four years after his return, but he also owes them some kind of loyalty. He is requested for instance to maintain a regular attendance at the Umuofia Progressive Union meetings during which even individual private matters can be discussed, a fact which emphasises the nature of the link that exists between the returned "been-to" and his sponsors. This is further explained by the Reverend Samuel Ikedi at the departure ceremony: when he tells Obi that "In times past... Umuofia would have required of you to fight in her wars and bring home human heads... Today we send you to bring knowledge."(No Longer,10).

The Reverend tells him not to be "like rain wasted in the forest," meaning that his going away should bring fruits and should not be wasted in his running after the "sweet things of the flesh"(10). His going away therefore takes the form of some kind of heroic achievement. As one of the best sons of Umuofia, he should bring back glory with him to his native place. Moreover, Obi's departure is also said to be " the fulfilment of a prophecy: "The people which sat in darkness // saw a great light,// and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, // to them did light spring up. (No Longer, 8).

In so quoting from the Bible, the Reverend not only places Obi in the role of a missionary, but also in that of the chosen man, the elected one who will bring knowledge and light to the people of darkness. In going to "the place where learning finally came to an end"(9), Obi conveys all the heavy hopes and expectations of his kinsmen.

The nature of these expectations becomes more precise on his return. While he visits his parents, "it was clear to Obi that they did not have enough good food to eat... And he (his father) had his two last children at school, each paying school fees and church fees"(55). Therefore one of the duties of Obi is to take the school fees in charge. As he sums it up on that first night in Umuofia, he comes to the conclusion that it will be necessary to give his parents a monthly allowance from his salary:

> It was clear that his parents could no longer stand on their own. They had never relied on his father's meagre pension. He planted yams and his wife planted cassava and coco yams. She also made soap from leachings of palm ash and oil and sold it to the villagers for a little profit. But now they were too old for these things. (No Longer, 60).

This is additionally developed in the idea of his being an "only palm-fruit". As one of the Umuofia Progressive Union members puts it, "Obi Okonkwo was indeed an only palm-fruit. His full name was Obiajulu - the mind at last is at rest; the mind being his father's of course who, his wife having borne him four daughters before Obi, was naturally becoming a little anxious." (No Longer, 6-7).

He is also an "only palm-fruit" in the sense that he is the first and unique male in the family and also the first one to benefit from a scholarship under the Umuofia Progressive Union scheme. But unfortunately, as Joseph mentions, it seems that he is like "the unfortunate child who grows his first tooth and grows a decayed one"(75). In asking him what sort of encouragement this foreseen failure would give the people who collected the money for his education, he indirectly points to the possibility of Obi's return being regarded as a failure.

There is indeed no return for Timi Tabane in The Wanderers as he and his family are on a one-way itinerary, especially as he becomes aware that his attempt to find a better place is rather a failure. However, it is precisely this feeling of non-fulfilment that gives birth to the motif of the parental figure; but instead of being distinct from the traveler, who has the feeling of being watched, as in the case of Amer, Yalann Waldik, and the others, this time they are one. Timi is at the same time the parent and the traveler. As a consequence, this parental bond is reversed and transferred

onto his son Felang.

Reflecting on the terms of their departure from South Africa and the restrictions attached to their 'one-way exit permit which meant that neither he nor Karabo could return on such a permit, Timi knows now that "this was thus the last time for her to see her mother; just as it has been the last time for Timi to see his younger brother and sister when they left"(The Wanderers, 170) and they had both "doubted the wisdom of their move at first. Gradually and yet not over a long period, the doubts and fears receded: they knew that "they were doing the only right thing if they were to retain their sanity and offer the children conditions for better schooling and upbringing.(170). The other reason for their choosing Iboyoru is the hope they place in the potentialities one can find in a newly independent country. Though Timi still faces adaptation problems in Iboyoru he is steadied by the thought that "these people he had come to live among had control over their lives as human beings"(The Wanderers, 208).

It is true that their children were at first glance having better educational opportunities than they would have had back in South Africa. This can be seen for instance in the various good schools Felang is able to go to despite his adaptation problems. He starts his schooling abroad in the coeducational school run by Taiwo Shola and is later moved to Takora High School, an institution with a high academic reputation. When the family later moves to Kambani in Lao Kiku, East Africa, he is given similar preferential treatment. As Timi says, "we sent him to a boarding school, Kambani Boys' Grammar School, which was reputed to have produced the elite of the country, including most of the present Cabinet ministers and permanent secretaries"(The Wanderers, 265).

In a conversation with Karabo, Timi tries to understand where the root of his son's troubles lies. He is led to examine Felang's early years and the impact they might have had on him. Since his school misbehaviour apparently originates from an anti-white sentiment, Timi reckons that - although the boy was not too much marked by the few years he had lived under the apartheid system - he was once exposed to an incident involving the relations between black and white . "Otherwise, Felang, like the other children, was relatively protected; until he would have to carry a pass, at sixteen. He had already tasted something of police terror. At sixteen he would begin to feel the muscle of police power. Terror would become his constant enemy."(The Wanderers, 242).

This is what would have awaited Felang had he stayed in South Africa. In the mind of his parents, the children are overprotected "against the things that give us pain as grown ups; they're protected against the white man's

brutality. Until they're thrown into the labour market - then they're beyond our protection"(The Wanderers, 240).

The point Timi is trying to make is to explain to Felang that he is now living in a different country and under different conditions altogether. When they still lived in South Africa they had to keep in mind that most whites were wicked and that they treated the black people very cruelly. But now that they have left South Africa,

> ... we're having to learn, all of us who come from the south, that we've to treat the white people who live under African governments differently. [...] In South Africa, if you went through the proper channels you'd meet another white man in a position of power and he'd never listen to you. So you looked for a short cut of dealing with the man who hurt you [...]. That's jungle law [...]. This isn't the same country! (The Wanderers, 238-9)

As Timi tells his son, he should think that he is lucky to have escaped from the jungle law prevailing in South Africa. Were he to have stayed there, now that he is sixteen, he would be "carrying a pass like the other children of [his] age, being chased about by the police"(The Wanderers, 266). Timi wants his son to make good use of his present privileges. In explaining to Felang how privileged he actually is, Timi draws a comparison with his own personal history and that of many of his generation. As he says

> many of my generation feel in a sense burnt up. Not defeated or apathetic. The sheer effort to survive, to push through private studies without financial help, with police brandishing guns and handcuffs and Special Branch police hounding you - things shouldn't be always uphill for a man. To be able to create, one should be reasonably well fed and have a decent living place - and you know this when you've been hungry for long periods and you've lived in a slum ghetto. So I ask you - why do you quarrel with privilege instead of using it? Just you remember - you can always do better than us! (The Wanderers, 267-8)

In Season of Migration to the North we cannot assert for sure that any protagonist thinks that it is desirable to go abroad. In fact it is the converse which is true, for if we concentrate on Mihaimid, we see that his aim it to return to into his original milieu at all costs, therefore relegating the experience abroad to the significance of a mere parenthesis. There is then no evidence of the voyage being desired from the point of view of the narrator. For Mustafa Sa'eed as well as other characters who support his views however, it can be said that they are clearly favourable to the idea of going abroad.

While at school, the foreign school representing here the first form of the voyage, his headteacher Mr Stockwell unreservedly encourages him to go abroad in the following words: "This country hasn't got the scope for that brain of yours, so take yourself off. Go to Egypt or Lebanon or England. We have nothing further to give you" (Season, 23).

His going abroad is desired in so far as he was the first Sudanese ever to be sent overseas on a grant. Moreover, if we consider the esteem and admiration in which he was held by his former classmates, it is undoubtedly a promotion to go overseas. As Mihaimid learns from of a retired civil servant who was a contemporary of Mustafa Sa'eed, the latter was one in whom many hopes were being invested. His being given an opportunity to higher education was seen in the context of colonial and post-colonial relationships of domination. Referring to the heyday of British domination in Sudan, he says: "They showed favours to nonentities - and it was such people that occupied the highest positions in the days of the English"(Season, 53-4). It was expected that Mustafa would "make his mark" i.e. put an end to the reign of mediocrity in post-colonial Sudan. As he has mentioned it earlier, he could have had an important post in any ministry: "I learnt from him that a number of my chiefs at the Ministry of Education were contemporaries of his at school, some having been in the same form with him. The man mentioned that so-and-so at the Ministry of Agriculture was a schoolmate of his..."(Season, 50-1). Therefore, if we consider the 'potential' achievement *per se* of Mustafa Sa'eed as compared to that of Mihaimid, we come to the conclusion that the voyage is desired. After all, Mihaimid is only an inspector of primary education in spite of his having a Ph.D,. whereas Mustafa Sa'eed could have become one of his chiefs at the Ministry, had he returned to Sudan after independence.

Collective good and benefit are equally at the centre of the conversation between Mustafa Sa'eed and Mihaimid. The former, an economist become an ordinary farmer in Wad Hamid, tells the latter that a been-to should be preoccupied with the usefulness of his degree. Referring to Mihaimid's doctorate in poetry, he tells him: "we have no need of poetry here. It would have been better if you'd studied agriculture, engineering or medecine"(Season, 9). This does not mean that Mustafa Sa'eed had done better than Mihaimid but he apparently keeps in mind the expected outcome and the promises of his own stay overseas.

Being the brightest boy of his generation, he was later to achieve academic distinctions which made people think he could become a minister, or a Mamur. In an analysis of Islam in the novels of Tayeb Salih, Nasr A.

Nahmad indicates that "Mustafa's return to the Sudan and finally to the village of Wad Hamid is an apology for the kind of life he has led before," that is overseas (Nasr, 1980, 97). Mustafa Sa'eed's will in which he recommends Mihaimid to educate his orphans in such a way that "they grow imbued with the air of this village, its smell and colours and history and the faces of its inhabitants and memories of its floods and harvestings and sowings"(Season, 66) shows how unsuccessful his stay overseas and his return were (and how he unconsciously seeks reintegration).

Therefore, through the acknowledgement of his own failure, Mustafa implies that Mihaimid has a more successful life, a life closer to roots and stability. This stability is often described in connection with the figure of the grandfather of which Nasr A. Nahmad says that he

> has a say in Mihaimid's education... Mihaimid pursues his studies in secular schools and crowns his education with a doctorate degree in literature from a British university... At home he feels that he is like the palm-tree standing in the courtyard of their house in Wad Hamid, that is, he is a being with a background, with roots, with a purpose. (Nasr, 1980, 96).

The function of the narrator's education in Britain, of his voyage abroad, is therefore summed up in his feeling of rootedness when he comes every now and then to the village. Although he mentions to Mahjoub that despite his education he is only a civil servant "of no consequence," he is still the figure of success when his itinerary is judged against that of Mustafa.

THE UNSUCCESSFUL RETURN: FAILURE

In Season of Migration to the North, success and failure are the two movements which sum up best the lives of both narrator and hero. If the novel concentrates on the latter, it is not excluded that both might be interchangeable, as will be shown at a later stage. Mustafa starts in life as an orphan. But very quickly, as he was an exceptionally brilliant pupil, his headmaster facilitated his departure and arranged a free place for him at a secondary school in Cairo, with a scholarship from the government. His outstanding academic records enabled him to be appointed a lecturer in economics at London university at the age of twenty-four. He later studyed law at the university of Oxford. He was also acquainted with important people and led the sexual life of a Don Juan. However, as it is suggested by an Englishman whom the narrator meets in Khartoum, the success of Mustafa Sa'eed is not genuine:

> It seems that he was a show-piece exhibited by members of the aristocracy who in the twenties and early thirties were affecting liberalism. It is said that he was a friend of Lord-this and Lord-that. He was also one of the darlings of the English left... Even his academic post... I had the impression he got for reasons of this kind. It was as though they wanted to say: Look how tolerant and liberal we are! This African is just like one of us! He has married a daughter of ours and works with us on an equal footing! (Season, 58-9).

As underlined here, his success was fake and temporary and it culminated into his being sentenced to seven years' imprisonment when found guilty of the murder of Jean Morris and the suicide of Ann Hammond, Sheila Greenwood, and Isabella Seymour. His stay in prison was a turning point for, on coming out of prison, he started wandering all over the world. This vagabondage was to take him from London to Paris, to Copenhagen, to Delhi and to Bangkok.

In Season of Migration to the North, the underlying structure is one that is divided into two movements, a rise to success which in turn leads to failure, of which vagabondage is only one form. However, if this evolution is presented in the terms of a rise and fall, or climax and anti-climax, during which the lives of the narrator and of Mustafa Sa'eed develop along parallel lines, the movement of the book finds a coherence which seemed to be lacking at first. The first rise and fall mentioned is that of Mustafa Sa'eed and even the way in which the narrator discovers him obeys the same rule of crescendo and decrescendo. Mustafa Sa'eed is first referred to, by the narrator's grandfather, as being a stranger, a mysterious man whose acquaintance is rather strange. This unknown face come to welcome him on his return from abroad is mysterious. Mahmoud, contributes to the mystery when he praises him for being a man of "a different clay"(12), who, according to him, was much respected in the Agricultural Project Committee and among the villagers. At a later stage, a lecturer whom the narrator meets in Khartoum adds: "Funny no one remembers him (Mustafa Sa'eed)... He's now a millionaire living like a lord in the English countryside"(56).This apparent suspense is maintained by other people like the retired Mamur who, having been one of his school mates, recalls his school days during which "Mustafa Sa'eed was the most brilliant student of our day. We were in the same form together. With a combination of admiration and spite, we nicknamed him the 'Black Englishman"(53-54). This gradual building up of mystery and suspense culminates in the episode where, after the death of Mustafa Sa'eed, the narrator decides it is time to have access to the latter's private and secret study. But before it is opened, Mahjoub, Mustafa Sa'eed's eldest son, significantly tells Mihaimid:

> Mustafa Sa'eed is in fact the Prophet El Kidr, suddenly making his appearance and as suddenly vanishing. The treasures that

> lie in this room are like those of the King Solomon, brought here by genies, and you have the key to that treasure. Open Sesame, and let's distribute the gold and jewels to the people.(Season, 107)

The inspection of the room room reveals the true nature of the man. He was himself a "mirage" and the public image he entertained does not correspond with the reality. In a presentation of the character of Mustafa Sa'eed, Nahmad Nasr writes that his

> return to the Sudan and finally to the village of Wad Hamid is an apology for the kind of life he has led before... (it is a quest which) proves to be a failure because it is not a genuine one. In spite of his settling down in Wad Hamid, participating in the village life, attending prayers regularly... Mustafa Sa'eed finds a sense of belonging in rootlessness... On the surface he has lived with the villagers but deep inside he could not rid himself of "The Black Englishman Mustafa". (Nasr, 1980, 97-8).

The various symptoms of failure can be read in Mustafa's life following three main lines: his childhood, his career abroad, and his return to Wad Hamid where he has a negative influence on both the village in general and on the narrator in particular.

Mustafa's childhood is that of an outsider. He is an orphan, with no relatives, and his relationship with his mother is devoid of motherly love and tenderness. He is not even moved when he hears of her death: "It is not surprising therefore, writes Nasr, that since his childhood Mustafa had the feeling of being free, with no ties whatsoever with the traditions" or what Nasr calls a "disassociation " from the mystic Sudanese society (Nasr, 1980, 95). When referring to his itinerary, Mustafa Sa'eed often uses, as we have seen, the image of a lonesome rider, of an Arab nomad with his camel, like a sailor on a ship unaware of his destination. His next destination is Cairo and then London where he knows academic and other successes.

On his way back to Sudan, he tells Mihaimid that his choice of the village of Wad Hamid was the fruit of coincidence: "I took a boat not knowing where I was bound for. When it put in this village, I liked the look of it. Something inside me told me this was the place"(Season, 11).

If the place has been beneficial to him, his influence on it is less positive. As Mustafa himself acknowledges, he has grown with a contagious germ of infection within him. It is this disease which he seems to bring to Wad Hamid and which influences its inhabitants and Mihaimid in particular.

Referring to the latter's ties with the village and to his sense of rootedness, Nasr notices that "this feeling of stability, continuity, and integrity is shaken in the Narrator when he comes into contact with Mustafa and knows his story"(Nasr, 1980, 97). As Mihaimid confesses, his mind is obsessed with "the phantom of Mustafa Sa'eed (which) appeared to me ... like

a genie who has been released from his prison and will continue thereafter to whisper in men's ears" (Season, 55).

Mustafa's negative influence can be shown with various examples. After their conversation, the Narrator feels Mustafa has reversed the roles between the true insider and the real outsider. Moreover he shows his lack of confidence, not only when he minimizes the importance of his job in Khartoum, but also when he is forced to take important decisions. For instance, his hesitation and refusal to take the widowed Hosna as a wife indicates the alienating influence of Mustafa on him. This whole process of questioning culminates in the episode of the last chapter where the narrator finds himself swimming in the Nile "metaphorically between the values of Europe and those of his native land, half-way between the northern and southern banks"(Nasr, 1980, 97):

> Turning to left and right, I found I was half-way between North and South. I was unable to continue, unable to return... Now I am making a decision. I choose life. I shall live because there are a few people I want to stay with for the longest possible time and because I have duties to discharge. It is not my concern whether or not life has meaning. (Season, 167-8-9).

As realized here by the narrator, he is the antithesis of Mustafa Sa'eed (if this opposition does not point to the psychological fact that the two characters just constitute the two sides of the same coin). The latter had, in his own words, no relatives, no roots, and came to the village of Wad Hamid in order to forget his past. But, as suggested by the microcosm of the British universe he has recreated in his study, and by the vagabondage he is subject to, the return of Mustafa Sa'eed looks like a dead end passage.

In spite of his being fully integrated into the village life, a few indicators show that he is still the stranger. Mahjoub for instance indicates that although he deserved it, Mustafa was not elected chairman of the Agricultural Project Committee owing to the fact that he was not a local man. His marriage with Hosna is also subject to similar comments for it is said that her family did not care to whom they married their daughters. In another case, the lineage of Mustafa Sa'eed is mentioned thus underlining, in the words of Nahmad Nasr, "his disassociation from the mystic Sudanese society," highlighting the ambivalent origin of Mustafa's parents:

> His father was from the 'Ababda' tribe who live on the borders of Sudan and Egypt. It is this tribe that had helped Slatin to escape from the Khalifa and had worked as guides in Kitchener's army. The tribe then is neither Sudanese nor Egyptian and presumably has no loyalty to Sudan. Mustafa's mother is from one of the Southern negroid pagan tribes who do not relate to Islam , popular or orthodox. (Nasr, 1980, 95)

The major factor in the case of Mustafa Sa'eed which makes his return and integration unsuccessful is probably his alienation symbolized by the presence of his secret study and its contents. It means that although he physically resides in Wad Hamid, he is still mentally living overseas.

Various indicators in No Longer At Ease contribute towards the idea that Obi's return is globally viewed as being unsuccessful. On a general level, this is the case if his present achievements are contrasted with the heavy expectations held before his departure.

To begin with the narrator puts an emphasis on Obi's mistakes, thus showing that he is not on the same wave-length as the Umuofians. The first mistake on his part was to change his subject of study without the consent of his sponsors. Therefore, even before his return, he causes some kind of disappointment as concerns the expectations of the Umuofians who reckon that he is driven by egotistic motivations.

His return is equally marked by a series of small mistakes which, while accumulating, irritate the members of the Umuofia Progressive Union. To begin with, and as indicated in chapter four, Obi returns home by cargo-boat instead of using the usual mail-boat which is quicker and more regular. Then, during the welcome reception, as he was expected to appear in *agbada* or European suit, he came in shirt-sleeves, although "everybody expected a young man from England to be impressively turned out"(31). Mistake Number One comments the narrator who identifies the next mistake in the unsophisticated type of language Obi uses in his reply to the welcome address of the Secretary of the Union. The mistakes keep accumulating as he is being rude to the President of the Umuofia Progressive Union who was advising him on private matters, and also as he is later caught and tried for having accepted a small bribe from a stranger. This leads to this feeling of irritation expressed by one of the members of the Umuofia Progressive Union who sees in Obi the prodigal son who has not only shown great disrespect to their Union but for whom they are now asked to pay for the services of a lawyer from their funds: "we paid eight hundred pounds to train him in England... But instead of being grateful he insults us because of a useless girl. And now we are being called again together to find more money for him"(5). On top of that the one mistake that fills him with shame is that he not only did not attend his mother's funeral, but he did not face it in a proper way either for: "it was already being said to his eternal shame that a woman who had borne so many children, one of whom was in a European post, deserved a better funeral than she got"(No Longer, 158).

The addition of these mistakes contributes to create around Obi the feeling of something unachieved as it is symbolised in the abortion

performed on Clara - it is not only hers but it is also that of Obi who has been unable to meet his people's expectations - and to fulfil to the letter the mission for which he had been sent overseas. He therefore seems to be trapped in a dead-end passage which leads him nowhere except towards some from of spiritual desert.

For Samba Diallo too, there is an element of abortion in that his stay overseas has not led him anywhere. The promises of the departure are not fulfilled and his behaviour indicates how deep his failure is. In order to provide another view of the nature of failure and unachievement - and its impact on the larger group - the case of Samba Diallo will be compared to that of Abala Stanley Mujungu, the focal figure of Africa Answers Back, who shows more initiative both during his time at the mission school of Reverend Hubert and after.

The conversation between Mujungu, new chief of the tribe, and the German doctor during the epidemic of smallpox points to one of the major differences between him and Samba Diallo. To the doctor who was asking him to initiate changes among his people, Mujungu replies that his desire is "to amalgamate what is good in the old and the new"(Africa, 246). He is conscious that, as a leader, his decisions will not be questioned, but he is also aware that, instead of throwing away his people's culture entirely, it will be far more effective to change it gradually.

This machiavellian statement points to the ability of the hero to decide, to make vital changes. Mujungu as a new leader shows that he is able to amalgamate or reject, reach a synthesis and decide quickly what the best is for his own people.Where his father chief Ati was subject to doubt, Mujungu decides. For instance, chief Ati's choice of forenames and of double baptism for his son illustrates his indecision: "I want my child to be washed of his sins twice. I want him washed by our method. Then, when he grows up, I wish him to be washed by the strange people's method. That will make the child clean both ways. That is why I want to name him after these people"(Africa, 55). It is out of ignorance that chief Ati decides to do so. Because he does not know whether the new religion is good or not, he opts for both baptisms and leaves it to Mujungu to determine later what is good and what is bad in it.

Contrasting with an hesitating chief Ati, Mujungu quickly understands where his interests lie. The episode of the broken arm illustrates this very well. While he is fighting the epidemic with the help of a team of doctors, a man with a broken arm has to be treated in the"modern way of treating a fracture"(Africa, 256). But to the amazement of the doctors, Mujungu has the witch-doctor fetched and tells them: "I think it will be better to have his

broken arm treated in our way. If God please, may I say African people treat broken arms better than Europeans do"(Africa, 256). The quick recovery of the man proves Mujungu is right. Earlier in the novel one of the doctors acknowledges the superiority of Africa in specific fields, especially in connection with the episode of drums where the efficiency of modern, i.e.European, science is contrasted with that of drums as traditional means of communication. After they have been contacted in this way, a team of doctors arrives from Kenya. One of them says: "They have remarkable things. It's almost like a wireless... We could probably learn many things from these people if we weren't obsessed with the idea that we are better than they in everything"(Africa, 254).

Nowhere in L'Aventure Ambiguë is it said that the Diallobé are in any way superior to the white invaders. Moreover Samba Diallo is remarkable for his indecision. Even the newly chosen spiritual guide Demba says that, in his place, he too would have hesitated. In fact the decisions which are made have been dictated by imitation. The children of the Diallobé are sent to the new school because it was noted that everybody else in the country was doing so. Even Demba's decision to open the Glowing Hearth to the new school, by changing its timetable, was a way of giving up, an attempt to reconcile both teachings. The only person who is able to keep a clear mind is the Knight as it is indicated in the contents of his letter recalling Samba Diallo. However, he has made up his mind too late.

Confronted to the invasion of foreign ways, the Africans depicted in both novels are shown to be hesitating. In Africa Answers Back the reader is told how there were wars between the sympathizers of the various religions, Protestantism, Catholicism, and Islam. In the royal court,

> The high chiefs congregated in the throne room, and the King asked them: 'My chiefs, what shall we do about religion? The Arab priests tell us that the Mohamedan religion is best; the French say that Catholicism is best, and the English say the same thing of protestantism. Which shall we choose?... For the present, each chief can choose whatever religion he wants! (Africa, 32-4).

The choice is left to the chiefs individually; each of them is free to do as he thinks is good. However this comes from the inability of both the King and his chiefs to reach a definite judgement.

It is also the inability of the ruling élite of the Diallobé that makes the royal family follow the example of the majority. As shown in the following passage, not even Thierno is able to advise his flock:

> Pourquoi veulent-ils que je sache, pensait le maître. Ils savent mieux que moi ce qu'ils veulent... Je ne dirai rien... car je ne sais rien. Je suis seulement l'humble guide de vos enfants, et non point de vous, mes frères... Je jure sur la

> Parole que je ne le sais pas... Vous attendez que je vous indique ce que vous ferez, comme dix indique onze à celui qui compte bien, n'est-ce pas?... Gens des Diallobé, je vous jure que je ne sais rien de semblable. Autant que vous, je voudrais savoir. (L'Aventure, 94-7).
> ["Why should they wish me to know?' the teacher was thinking.. 'They know better than me what it is that they want... I will say nothing... because I know nothing. I am only the humble guide for your children, and not at all for you, my brothers... I swear upon the Word that I do not know... You are waiting for me to indicate to you what you ought to do, as ten indicates the following eleven to the man who can count. Isn't that so?... People of the Diallobé, I swear to you that I have no such knowledge as that. As much as yourselves, I should like to know...."(Woods, 82-5)]

The only person who knows and is not consulted is the Knight. He is able to identify the incompatibilities between traditional Islam and Western materialism. For him no compromise is possible. The two ways are incompatible. This is why he tells his son that he was wrong in sending him abroad. As far as he is concerned, Samba Diallo is shocked by his experience in Paris. When Lucienne asked him whether it was preferable to have sent priests or doctors to Africa, the only answer he is able to give her is "si tu me proposes le choix entre la foi et la santé du corps"(L'Aventure, 128) ["if you are thus offering me the choice between faith and the health of the body"(Woods, 116)]. Like Yalann Waldik in Les Boucs, he is too 'intellectual' for, as captain Hubert remarks, "il n'y a que les intellectuels pour souffrir de cela"(L'Aventure, 163) ["it is only the intellectuals who suffer from that"(Woods,150)]. Samba Diallo is caught in a kind of dilemma which he is unable to solve. He is, as he says, "en détresse de n'être pas deux"(164) ["in distress over not being two"(Woods, 151)] but he is neither the one, nor the other. As he clearly puts it, he is a hybrid, subject to an incomplete metamorphosis:

> Il arrive que nous soyons capturés au bout de notre itinéraire, vaincus par notre aventure même. Il nous apparait soudain que tout au long de notre cheminement nous n'avons pas cessé de nous métamorphoser, et que nous voilà devenus autres. Quelquefois la métamorphose ne s'achève pas, elle nous installe dans l'hybride et nous y laisse. Alors, nous nous cachons remplis de honte. (L'Aventure, 124-5, emphasis mine)
> ["It may be that we shall be captured at the end of our itinerary, vanquished by our adventure itself. It suddenly occurs to us that, all along our road, we have not ceased to metamorphose ourselves, and we see ourselves as other than what we were. Sometimes the metamorphosis is not even finished. We have turned ourselves into hybrids, and there we are left. Then we hide ourselves, filled with shame. (Woods, 112-3)]

Mujungu too has undergone a deep metamorphosis. The latter's, however, has not been interrupted. At the end of his itinerary, Mujungu, while transformed, is not an unconscious hybrid. He has chosen his hybridity by deciding to amalgamate "what is good in the old and the new". This is shown in his reply to Reverend Hubert when he tells him that the white man's science is more useful than his religious exaltation.

As shown here, Mujungu has a clear and critical mind whereas Samba Diallo is confused and imitative. The latter's concern, on the Night of the Koran for example - a night during which according to the custom, the child who has completed his studies in the Koran and returned to his parents should, in their honour, recite the Holy Book from memory throughout all of one night - was that he was able to do as his ancestors did. One must say that he had been well prepared by Thierno's special treatment at the Glowing Hearth. In the new school he is also able to give the standard answers M. N'Diaye is expecting. However, quite unlike Mujungu, he has never made any decision on his own.

While at the mission school, Mujungu gives the Reverend and his provosts a hard time. He is totally reluctant to any form of indoctrination or depersonalisation. When the Reverend tells them that he wants them to be "trained away from [their] African habits, and towards Western ideals," and forbids them to play their African games in the school yard, Mujungu reacts by doing precisely the opposite and sticking to his traditional game of Bali for example.

A similar opposition between confident characters and far less assured ones is illustrated by Ayi Kwei Armah when he contrasts, in his novels, an ineffective been-to with his negative double. The defenceless Teacher and the ineffective Man belong to the first category. They seem to be at the mercy of the others while at the same time they are not able to make any positive decision. This characteristic is shared by the protagonists of Armah's other novels. Baako can be shown to be extremely vulnerable, especially if his predicament is read in connection with, and in the light of, the episode of the rabid dog; in Why Are We So Blest? Modin and Solo are also powerless creatures, especially the former who is tortured by O.A.S. soldiers in the desert.

In The Beautyful Ones the opposition effectiveness/ineffectiveness is rendered mainly in the use of one particular symbol, the car, and the action of the driver, the car symbol of individual success, contrasted with the bus, which is a more collective form of transportation, therefore less

prestigious. A semantic analysis of all car-related vocabulary as well as the vocabulary related to speed and absence of speed will reveal the place where the Man and Teacher situate themselves.

The absence of speed can for instance be seen in the example of the bus. As Kolawole Ogungbesan has noticed, The Beautyful Ones opens and closes on the road. In the beginning, "a decrepit bus, bearing the Man, who is fast asleep, sputters to a stop in the dark night. At the end of the book it is early morning and a very new bus, bearing the inscription which gives the novel its title, takes off on its long journey." (Ogungbesan, 1973, 4). Its passengers are referred to as the ones in control, like the driver and the conductor, as opposed to the passive passengers. The latter are referred to as "walking corpses," or later as "only bodies walking in their sleep". As the narrator adds, these seem to have nightmares in which they are "dwarves unable to run away and little insects caught up in endless pools" (The Beautyful Ones, 2). The "walking corpses" mentioned here are to be again identified with the "sleepwalker cleaner" who comes to clean the offices of the Railway Administration Building. When he enters the man's office he becomes a "bent bucket (that) swung through the open door and behind it came a small man lugging a brush and a mop with a handle taller than himself [...] a sleepwalker with a smile straight from the dead." (The Beautyful Ones, 32).

The Man and Teacher belong to the category of the sleepwalker cleaner. They are very different from the "heroes of the gleam" the Man refers to. While walking back home at the end of the day, he notices that, at the other end of his itinerary, "there was only home, the land of the loved ones, and there it was only the heroes of the gleam who did not feel that they were strangers. And he had not the kind of hardness that the gleam required." (The Beautyful Ones, 35)

The figure of Koomson is a typical representation of the "heroes of the gleam." Although he is described as "the suit" as mentioned earlier, the important part of the description focuses on his car which, it is said, is "an object made of power and darkness and gleaming light [that] comes shimmering in a potent moving stream." (The Beautyful Ones, 36). The image of the car and its driver comes back again and again to indicate that it stands for the symbol of the successful ones. Everybody wants to be a driver. This is what Oyo tells her husband as he reports it to Teacher:

> my wife explained to me, step by step, that life was like a lot of roads: long roads, short roads, wide and narrow, steep and level, all sorts of roads. Next she let me know that human beings were like so many people driving their cars on all

> these roads. This was the point at which she told me that those who wanted to get far had to learn to drive fast. And then she asked me the name I would give to people who were afraid to drive fast, or to drive at all. I had no name to give her, but she had not finished. Accidents would happen, she told me, but the fear of accidents would never keep men from driving, and Joe Koomson had learned to drive. (The Beautyful Ones, 58-9)

As the Man further tells Teacher, it was not philosophy Oyo had in mind, but Ghana, and he understands that she wanted him to represent the driver, and that accidents stand for those who get caught, like Zacharias Lagos, a Nigerian living in Ghana who sells for his own profit the wood he has appropriated from state supplies. These "revolving thoughts of speed, of Oyo and cars and drivers, and of accidents" (96) lead him to understand that "cowards only are afraid to drive" (96). He perfectly knows that even with hard work he would never be able to "bring the self and the loved ones closer to the gleam [...] There would always be one way for the young to reach the gleam, cutting corners, eating the fruits of fraud." (95). He is aware that in order to succeed, an approach to the gleam has to be done in one exclusive way, "in one bold, corrupt leap that gives the leaper the power to laugh with contempt at those of us who still plod on the daily round, stupid, honest, dull, poor, despised, afraid. We shall never arrive. Unless of course, we too take the jump." (96).

However, although he has a clear idea of what he has to do in order to succeed, the Man, in the final chapter of the novel, not only goes through an unsuccessful rite of purification in sea-water - after his short flight with Koomson - but is equally left standing on the roadside, still caught in the middle of his hesitations, looking passively at the new bus which is as corrupt as the decrepit one which opened the novel. He still remains the silent watcher its driver must have seen by the roadside.

Naana, Baako, Juana, and Ocran, the protagonists in Fragments, also have the feeling that they are left on the roadside, liminal characters who are stranded on the threshold of a society which despises or spits on the values they stand for.

Although Ocran has kept contact with important people such as the Principal Secretary to the Ministry of Information he acknowledges that he is somewhat outdated. As he tells Baako "not many of you come back to see me" (Fragments, 78). Speaking of his former students over whom he no longer has any control or influence, he tells Baako "[y]ou people choose what you want, and I keep hoping, but in a year or two I'll be ready to give up all hope." (79). To a certain extent Ocran is like the statues that line his

office; he cannot express anything but pain at the sight of the plight of Africa. The pain expressed in the sculpted figures has its equivalent in the blindness of Naana. As she herself admits "[s]ometimes I know that my blindness was sent to me to save me from the madness that would surely have come by seeing so much that was not to be understood." (10). Although she is not totally blind to what is happening around her, she has no control over events and her advice is never asked for. She is aware that she is too old to be of any use. She sees herself as "the pregnancy that will make another ghost" (10). Despite the fact that there is little strength left in her, she manages in a last effort to maintain the circle unbroken by scolding Foli when he tries to cheat the ancestors of their libation at Baako's departure ceremony. This act however is her last one for after the birth of Araba's baby she is reduced to the role of a passive witness at the premature outdooring ceremony. Her uselessness is best summed up in her own words when she thinks: "I am a person no more, unable to help myself. What is still left of my bones and of the flesh that clings to it would make a small enough burden for my head, but for them, it has too long been an annoying burden. I am old and of no use to anyone..."(Fragments, 2).

However, if Naana's helplessness and uselessness can be explained by her old age, it is not the case with the Puerto-Rican psychiatrist Juana. Her feeling of helplessness is first described when she witnesses the killing of the rabid dog. Characteristically, she is unwilling to take part in the collective frenzy and speed. After the incident of the dog, she starts driving but at a slow speed as contrasted with that of the other drivers who are in a hurry "driving mostly new white Mercedes or light gray Peugeot cars, spe[eding] angrily trying to get past the long Shell tanker in front. Juana let them pass, going slowly, looking at the life that lined the roadside" (i.e. the now dead rabid dog)." (Fragments, 21).

As a matter of fact she avoids contact with any other human beings. She is shown to refuse to be "anything outside her professional self" (101). Her attempts to develop informal relationships with the nursing staff of the hospital are all in vain for she is constantly reminded that she is a foreigner, unable to understand local people and to adapt to their conditions. This is why she "sensed the unavoidable estrangement, the politeness of distances created for strangers like herself." (12-3). If she regularly escapes to the beach, it is in order to avoid facing the reality of the hospital too directly and for too long. In so doing, she is not unlike some other foreigners in Accra:

> Juana has seen that the foreigners who survive life in Accra have deliberately become less sensitive to the life around them.... Blindness seems, in fact, to be preferable to any

> kind of clear-sightedness, simply because, like solitude, it spares one a good deal of pain." (Lobb, 1980, 32)

The reaction of others leads her to take refuge in what she calls a "comforting psychological reflex [...], the process of reaching back for refuge in that habit, searching for the ease of dealing with a patient, pushing the threat of having to confront another human being." (Fragments, 100). As she often experiences a need for flight in her long walks and drives to the beach, she acknowledges her own ineffectiveness. Although she is a doctor who is supposed to help patients get over their troubles, she is obsessed by failure in her private life. She is supposed to help Baako and she happens to be away when he most needs her.

In her relationship with Baako, she is shown to deal with another defenceless and ineffective human being. Their first interview which takes place at the hospital reveals her desire to treat him just like any other patient, "a patient come to see a doctor, a man face to face with a woman, a stranger talking across a desk to another stranger, or perhaps to a possible friend." (Fragments, 100). As the second term of the alternative indicates, Juana finds herself dealing with Baako as a human being, a friend, and a lover, and she is therefore placed in a position which allows her to understand the nature of his liminality. By being his lover and his unique confidant, she is given a privileged insight into his dilemma.

Baako's problem is twofold. He is first an ineffective protagonist in so far as he is unable to answer his family's needs. In so doing he is shown to be totally different from the other returned ones; he does not correspond to the ready-made image of the successfully returned 'been-to'. Therefore, and this constitutes the second aspect of his dilemma, he is powerless in front of the reaction of others, more so when he becomes mad and is given the same kind of hostile treatment as the rabid dog received earlier.

As has been noted earlier in this analysis, Baako is the unconventional 'been-to'. His physical appearance is ordinary and undistinguished, and at the same time he does not have this superior air that is often distinctive of the returned been-to. Moreover, he does not bear the external signs of a successful return; no car, no material goods brought back to satisfy the waiting ones. Efua for example has hinted several times at her desire to rest her old bones in Baako's new car but Fifi Williams had to divert the conversation to hide the painful truth from her. Fifi's secretary Christina also reminds Baako of the 'been-to's promises. When she tells him at the child's outdooring ceremony "[y]ou promised to come and take me for a cool ride one day... soon as your car arrived you told me"(Fragments, 182), she is no doubt perfectly serious for, in her mind, there is no 'been-to'

without a car. A similar incredulity can again be read in the reaction of the men who brought him in ropes when he became mad. As he is laid down in the yard safely tied up, they consider this 'been-to', returned only a year ago, whom they were unable to identify as a graduate for "we saw him walking to take the bus every morning, so we were not so sure... They could at least have given him a bungalow." (Fragments, 173).

The ineffectiveness of the returned one can also be best seen in the symbol of Efua's unfinished house. While at the acute ward in the hospital, Baako remembers in a flashback that his mother took him to see the remains of her unfinished house. As she describes it "these rooms were warm like a good deep dream [...] I started all this, thinking I was building something you would come and not find too small. I was hoping you would come back to me, take joy in the thing I had begun but will never end, and finish it" (Fragments, 178-9). As opposed to this expectant dream, the sight of the unfinished house is most revealing. Every material there is shown to be spoiled, wood is attacked by termites, rotting, while the pipes are not only rusting but twisted, symbolizing the painful destruction of Efua's dream.

As a consequence of their disappointment, the others react in a rather violent way. The first of these reactions takes place in Ghanavision. As soon as he begins work and submits a script to Asante-Smith, the boss of the corporation, the latter clearly tells him he is wasting their time. The most important reaction however is to be found in the way Baako is treated when he becomes mad.

Seeing his fever rising, Efua calls his uncle Foli, Korankye, and other men who come to take him to the mental hospital. To Baako these men are really hostile: "behind Korankye, two other men had approached, silent, with the air of men awaiting an important, secret order [...] He was feeling closed in standing here with Korankye and the two strangers behind him, looking into his uncle's eyes in front." (Fragments, 168). Feeling trapped, he runs away, followed by men carrying ropes and a group of children who start throwing stones at him. His pursuers grow more and more determined to catch him and he clearly feels his being helpless:

> now that he could look at his pursuers he saw there was no one there he recognised. He had lived here a year, knowing nobody around [...] this was not true of the area alone, but of the whole city. He knew no friends, no one. The people he had worked with at Ghanavision he had not known so well that he could think of them as friends at a time like this. Juana, of course. But she was away, or perhaps was just arriving from a tiring voyage. But in the area around, no one. (Fragments, 171)

Desperately trying to find a friendly face that would testify for his sanity, he sees Brempong who drives past him but the latter does not seem to recognize him. Baako gives up when his pursuers approach with ropes and try to tie him up:

> He grew tired and was ready to sit down when one man aiming well threw his rope and caught his ankles, yanked the tight fiber and brought him down. He was not worried about struggling with his pursuers any more, but he was full of a wonder that threatened to turn into fear[..]
> While his wrists were being bound, a man in sandals was called to stand on his fingers so that he would not scratch while the knots binding his legs and arms were made tight enough to keep him from breaking loose again. (Fragments, 173, partly quoted elsewhere)

Baako is now in a state of mind in which he is unable to put up any resistance. looking back at the events that followed his return, he describes himself as the "foolish one". He admits that his mother had a right to her expectations: "Efua was right to think of the returned one as fruit, ripe fruit of her womb. Seeing the other fruit grow riper, watching hers turn green and hard and hurtful to the open consuming mouth, she was right. What had she done wrong that all her hope should be so harshly torn?" (Fragments, 176)

The same attitude of looking back at events is also to be found with Solo Nkonam and Modin Dofu, the two central figures of Why Are We So Blest?. So much so that Solo seems to have no future for, as he says, everything is behind him and this can be summed up in one word: failure. Wishing to take part in revolutionary action, both Solo and Modin are told they are useless and ineffective. While he is at the hospital, Solo unconsciously compares himself to the one-legged man, a veteran who has lost a leg in the fight. If the latter is in hospital for an apparent physical disease, it is not the case with Solo who is there because the hospital is a refuge from his sickness. A sickness that originates in the feeling of being a useless figure. While he comes across beggars every day in Laccryville, he is unable to help them in an effective way. If they are orphaned or wounded ones who have not chosen their condition, at least, he thinks, they belong to a people who has shown its determination to fight a revolutionary war. As for Solo, he is living among them because he has chosen it but he is not contributing anything to improve their situation.

NO RETURN CASES: MWANGI, CHRAIBI, MPHAHLELE

The four preceding examples - Mihaimid/Mustafa Sa'eed, Obi Okonkwo, Samba Diallo, and Baako Onipa - constitute, as has been shown, illustrations of a return that has taken place rather unsuccessfully as the returned 'been-to's' do not meet the expectations of the ones left behind. Although they return to their respective countries, it is soon understood that they are totally ineffective and they become quickly marginalised.

A case of complete no return is that of Topographie in which the portrait Boudjedra makes of Said suggests that it could not end otherwise than by murder. The reader understands that his presence in the undergroundis a challenge to the symmetry. The peasant of Topographie does not correspond to any particular type of outsider. He is a general outsider, an emigrant transplanted into an alien and hostile environment. He is a total stranger to the customs, the language, the codes of French society of which the Parisian undergroundis a microcosm. Seeing French society from without, trying to understand it and judging it by his own standards, the peasant is presented as a physical outsider. It is his physical appearance which is asymmetrical: "il continuait à être dissymétrique (avec) une épaule plus grande que l'autre" (Topographie, 15) ["he was still asymmetrical, one shoulder higher than the other"] (et portait une valise) "en carton bouilli" (7) "il portait tout le temps sa valise à la main gauche" (127) ["he was carrying a fibreboard case; he always held his suitcase with the left hand"]

His appearance of deformity is contrasted with the geometry of the undergroundwhere "la symétrie est scrupuleusement respectée... La symétrie est partout: par exemple les petits panneaux publicitaires ... se font face deux par deux ... il en est de même des portes se faisant face, quatre de chaque côté."(Topographie, 71-72) [symmetry is scrupulously respected... Symmetry is present everywhere: the small publicity posters for example ... were facing each other in twos... so were the train doors which were which were facing each other, four on each side."]

It is said that his presence in the undergroundis anachronical; he should not be here according to the police officer: "C'est quand la date exacte de l'arrêt de l'émigration décidée par leur grand vizir, le 19 ou le 20 septembre?... Et ce con qui s'amène le 26! " (Topographie, 225-226) ["When exactly did their grand Vizier decide to stop emigration: was it the 19th or the 20th of September? Why does this idiot have to come on the 26th?"]

The peasant is also an outsider as shown by his mental state. As he is illiterate he cannot read the directions. Even after a helpful traveller has told him how to reach his destination, the narrator underlines that "il n'avait quand même pas compris grand' chose au plan que l'autre lui avait montré du doigt"(18) [to him the directions the other had pointed out for him were not so clear"]. He loses every notion of direction, "ne sachant pas quel est le nord du sud et quel est l'est de l'ouest"(19) [unable to distinguish between North and South"] and "la perplexité l'enfonçait dans des profondeurs hallucinantes"(Topographie, 39) [his perplexity was plunging him into hallucinatory depths"]. He is in absolute inadequation with the universe of the Underground:

> La brisure se fait à l'intérieur par l'addition de tous ces amalgames, mélanges, enchevêtrements, imbrications, amoncellements divers d'un même et unique phénomène le dépassant ..... un code de connexions qu'il n'arrive pas à déchiffrer mais qu'il ressent comme inscrit irrémédiablement dans ces tatouages qui commencent à hanter son esprit.(Topographie, 75-6)
> ["it is an internal split, one that is provoked by the accumulation of these amalgams, mixtures, tangles, overlappings, and various heapings up of a unique phenemenon that was beyond his grasp, ... a code of connections he is unable to decode but which he feels as being irremediably engraved in these tatoos that are beginning to haunt his mind."]

He is all the more confused that the lascars told him it would be as simple as a children's game. His reaction is to compare the unfamiliar with the familiar. Various flashbacks illustrate this movement of the mind based on similarities or reminiscences: a colour, an accent heard in a conversation....

His inadaptations, both physical and mental, climax in the outcome of his voyage abroad. Although it is expected to bear a glorious character when it is compared to an Odyssey, the voyage proves to be unsuccessful. He does not reach his destination and his attempt becomes an "Odyssée impitoyable" which ends up in a mere murder.

Half-way between the unsuccessful returns and this absence of return at all, there are cases where the 'been-to' goes back home under some kind of pressure but, as he is faced with the evidence of his failure, decides that he no longer belongs there and is forced to do the same crossing again. This is illustrated in the case of Meja, in Kill Me Quick and Yalann Waldik in Les Boucs.

In both novels the focal figures are given the opportunity to return to their native village. Yalann Waldik is deported with the help of Mac O'Mac who pays for the travel expenses to get rid of him, whereas Maina is helped to return home by a nurse who gives him the money for his bus-fare. As they both go back home, each of them meets a parental figure in which he is able to read, like the Man of the Beautyful Ones, the reproach of the loved ones. For Yalann the reproach is unvoiced; he reads it in his father's countless wrinkles :

> [...] il avait vu son père le mendiant des routes. Le visage de son père. Qu'il avait toujours su ridé, certes. Mais non à ce point. Il y a des rides qui sont des sanctions. D'autres qui n'expriment rien du tout, des rides, de simples rides. Celles de son père étaient de la vérole. Fines et multipliées couturant sa face, si atrocement qu'il se demanda quand il avait eu la vérole. Et quelle espèce aiguë de vérole...
> Comme on ajoute une figue à un chapelet de figues, comme on ajoute une journée vide à une vie vide, il avait soigneusement compté les rides de cette face et les avaient additionnées à ses milles petites misères anciennes. (Les Boucs, 127-8).
> ["he had seen his father, the beggar on the road. His father's face. Which he always knew was wrinkled. But not quite to such a degree. There are wrinkles which are a kind of penalty. Others which explain nothing at all, simply wrinkles and nothing more. His father's were from smallpox. Thin deep lines that cut into the face with such cruelty that he wondered when he had had smallpox... He had carefully counted the wrinkles on that face as you might a fig onto a string of figs or one empty day onto another, and he had added them to his thousand ancient miseries."(Harter, 81)]

The father's wrinkle-ridden face grows into something more serious as the young Berber he meets at the airport tells him "tu le trouveras assis sur une pierre au détour du chemin, il n'a plus de terre, plus de bras, plus de foi pour continuer de subsister de lui même [...]"(Les Boucs, 103) ["You will find him sitting on a rock at the turn in the road. He has no land anymore, no arm anymore, no faith to keep him going." (Harter, 64)].

Maina's father too has reached starvation point for, as he returns to the village, he is unable to find his father's house because it does not exist any longer. As the new owner tells him

> They squandered all their money on sending one of the boys to school. The boy read well, so I hear. He was a good type. But when he finished school, he went to the city, got himself a job and became spoilt. He never came back. [...]
> During the time of the long drought [...] the old man sent his remaining sons out to the city to look for the lost one. They too never came back. That old man was clever. And his wife too. Those two were good people. Well, the drought got worse and his old woman fell ill from worry. The old man sold out and went away with her. Just the two of them. (Kill Me Quick,

135)

To Yalann no comment is needed. His father's face, and the living conditions at home are the unbearable expression of his own failure. It is an exactly similar guilt that is felt by Meja as he arrives to the village and meets his undernourished twelve-year-old sister Wambui :

> The rays of the sun fell on a tiny twelve-year-old girl standing in front of him. She was dressed in a dirty old calico sheet that knotted over one shoulder and fastened with a pin below the armpit. The knot was shiny with grime and her collarbone was white beneath the skin. Her head was closely shaven and hard. Her eyes peered at him from the depths of the sockets and a long thread-like neck held the head high above the thin chest. The only thing that showed that the little creature was a girl were the two pimples of breasts that stuck out of her thin chest and showed vaguely under the sheet she wore. Meja watched the pathetic little figure that was his sister and his stomach ached. (Kill Me Quick, 93).

In Meja's case the reproach is both verbal and physical. Physical first because he is looking here at a little creature, too thin and too small for her age, and who could have had a better life had he succeeded in the city. Verbal also because Wambui candidly reminds him that he had promised to bring her back a little blue necklace. Instead he has come back almost crippled, with a lame hand and a limping leg. Very much like Yalann's appearance which has not improved since he first went overseas, Wambui's insistent look at Meja's crooked hand suggests that her brother's appearance has changed, and not for the better. When he went to the city, he was all big bones and had intelligent eyes. Though he was wearing his father's old baggy suit, wide tie and pair of oversize shoes, he was better dressed than Maina who was in khaki shorts "now tattered and anything but khaki in colour, and [whose] feet were bare and horny, the nails of the toes standing out at weird angles."(Kill Me Quick, 4). As he comes back to the village some years later, his physical appearance has not improved. As we see him in the bus, he is a "bone wretch" who has lost all confidence: "Inconspicuously in the corner of the back seat sat a young man with tattered clothes and a bewildered face. His large eyes flitted miserably here and there, from one face to the next, and dropped at once whenever any of the faces glanced back."(Kill Me Quick, 89).

Later, on his way back to the city, when he applies for a job at a quarry, he is compared with the other miners who do not even notice him, "a midget among them." The foreman at first disregards him for he sees in him only "thread arms, legs with bones almost showing through the skin"(Kill Me Quick, 104), and tells him that a lot more muscle is needed in order to become a qualified miner. In the words of the foreman, "He couldn't even push a wheelbarrow full of rocks from the look of him. Not with that kind of

muscle."(Kill Me Quick, 104).

And as the little girl is looking at his crooked hand, Meja is already seeing his past years in a quick mental flashback :

> His heart started racing again. His mind whirled. Dustbins flew through it. Cars, policemen, cars, people and... at the back of his mind brakes screamed...
> Meja's body was quite rigid and tears flowed down his cheeks. His muscles were tense and at the corners of his mouth a little froth formed.
> At the back of his mind he seemed to hear a car honk. He spun round instinctively and accidentally threw the little girl to the ground. But down the cold evening path nothing moved. With a cry of despair the boy collapsed on the grass. (Kill Me Quick, 96-7).

Unable to face his parents' eyes, he recovers and runs away before his mother arrives at the crossroads and he leaves her only a symbolic shilling to find, lying in the dust, next to Wambui's hesitant handwriting. To him his home and family were a mere scar on his past, a past that is still painful and provokes a feeling of nausea in Meja. When he sees Wambui for instance, he asks her where his father is. When she tells him he went to her uncle to borrow money for her school fees so that she can later go to the city and get a job like Meja's, the latter's mind envisions a fast-spinning circle in which Meja and Wambui are interchangeable. As he puts it: "School, money, fees, school, necklace, swam through his head. Only they made too much sense the way they were, confused. That was what hurt."(Kill Me Quick, 94).

What actually hurts Meja is his own awareness of the uselessness of the whole cycle of education, the expectations for a better job in the city, and his own helplessness, his own incapacity to do anything to change this state of things. In so reasoning, Meja is not unlike Baako, in Armah's Fragments, as he is nauseated by the sight of his sister's newborn baby. To him his nephew's birth is no occasion for rejoicing, since he is doomed to go through the same cycle as his: "Babyhood, infancy, going to school ... the thought of a person having to go through the whole cycle again brought back his nausea, and suddenly the room to him felt too humid, too full with the mother, the child, and him."(Fragments, 88).

Apart from the Algerian emigrant in Topographie who gets ultimately murdered - therefore excluding any return to the *Piton* - Meja, Maina, and Baako, like Timi Tabane, have the uncomfortable feeling that they are caught in endless and fast-spinning circles. Meja and Maina are facing an impending and constant wandering. (So is Baako, and so is Ayi Kwei Armah are we

tempted to say, for, after his second novel, he has not managed to settle in his native Ghana). Feeling at home neither in the village nor in the city, they do not fundamentally differ from Timi Tabane whom the experience of exile has taught that his life will, whatever may happen, be a continuous peregrination, Iboyoru and Lao Kiku being mere places for a call in his endless search for stability.

This is transparent in the letter he sends Awoonor from Kambani in which he tells him: "Maybe I shall come back. [...] If I don't come back, it will be because I recognize the urge to keep going. You see once you have left your native shores, you continue to circle up there. like a bird in a storm. Only, the storm is inside you this time."(The Wanderers, 263-4).

At the origin of this feeling of turning in endless circles is the awareness that African countries are not really totally independent yet: "Africa's still a white man's paradise, not a black exile's. The white man may eventually have no future in Africa, but he's certainly making himself indispensable as long as he can, while the black man still wants him or is still aspiring to be his equal"(The Wanderers, 304).

It is this painful reality that he is able to discover with the help of George Wingdon, an English lecturer he meets in Kambani, for example. While the latter has helped him have a job in Kambani College, he is also the one who gives him the bad news: the college appointments committee has decided not to renew Timi's contract when it expires in six months' time. In fact they want to employ someone who is finishing his M.A. at Leeds. As George tells him, Timi is the easy target and he is ulcered that they have not sacrificed a white man instead: "after all you're the only African in the whole thing, Timi. The blacks on the committee echo the Minister's voice and *he* echoes his English adviser's - so where are we?"(The Wanderers, 239).

In thus speaking George Wingdon conveys his deep disillusionment with Africans. After serving African interests for nearly eighteen years he decides to go to Canada at the end of his contract. This disillusionment is shared by Timi who also emigrates again a few years later and learns in a painful way that "in certain conditions you were not necessarily assured of a hearing if you went through the proper channels simply because you lived under the black man's rule."(The Wanderers, 239).

The other painful things Timi has already learnt essentially revolve around questions relating to educational and political issues. When he decides to leave for Lao Kiku it is because he hopes that the situation will be different there. But as he is told in a letter by Steven Cartwright, "Kambani is no African city at all in spite of an African government and all"(The Wanderers, 280). On arriving in Kambani, Timi discovers that Steven was right. The east side of the town is a ghetto-like township reserved for

Africans, with an Indian sector on the northeast and a white suburbia west, south, and north of the town. While considering these separations Timi is able to see a copy of a South African town. As he says:

> This is Kambani, a city which more than sixty years ago used to be all swamp. Here native cattlemen came to water their stock. And now, as one South African refugee exclaimed on arrival, this could be a piece of Tirong, hell! And this is Lao Kiku, a country ruled by blacks: a people who have political power but only little money to back it with, and who have to depend on minority groups like the whites and the Indians.(The Wanderers, 282)

On realizing that his expectations are inevitably disappointed, Timi starts a mental process of deconstruction. In his mind he associates images made of contrasts, contrasts between a South African reality he thought he had left behind, and the realities of both Iboyoru and Lao Kiku which, although they are independent, are not different from a country ruled by whites.

While he came to Iboyoru thinking that he would live among people who had control over their lives because they were under black rule, he soon discovers that independence is only a cover and makes no difference as to the fundamental questions. Witness for example the question of servants he had to confront on arrival to Iboyoru. He thought that this was exclusive to South Africa where black people, like his own mother, had to work for whites, but the same thing exists in Iboyoru with the only difference that these servants are employed by other blacks.

This black ruling elite, educated overseas or under the British system, is the object of his attacks. Like Modin in Why Are We So Blest? he understands that these intellectuals are "factors" in the enslavement of their own people. There are exceptions like Ladi or Taiwo Shola who "starts a high school because he believes, and rightly too, that we ought to teach our children what we think will be of use to our country - an African country - not what will please the British examiners."(The Wanderers, 180). Timi and his Iboyoru friends realize that this is not an easy task. "After all the government's education officers are British and they're interested in promoting exams that require a British education"(The Wanderers, 180). As for the African elite, its reaction is very much the same, the reason being that "It's going to take courage to repudiate the education that elevated them to their present position"(The Wanderers, 181).

In accusing the educated elite of the persistence of this factorship link, Mphahlele reminds one of a similar indictment that is expressed in Why Are We So Blest?. While criticizing the scheme that sends African students

overseas for studies, he understands that these M.A. and Ph.D. holders coming back from abroad are mere instruments, factors for the enslavement of their own peoples. This is to be read, as we have suggested earlier, in the symbol of Komo Batsia's State House, which has its parallel in the Christiansborg Castle mentioned by Armah in Why Are We So Blest?

In so deconstructing the idealized image of a newly independent African country, Timi, like Modin, or like Mustafa Sa'eed, acknowledges that he is caught in a dead end passage, especially when he is faced with the materialization of his own failure in the person of his son Felang. His strong preoccupation with leaving his children strong moral guidance is the result of his own failure; he knows that it went wrong somewhere for him and that, like for Mustafa Sa'eed, it is of vital importance that he prevents his children from succumbing to such an endless wandering, i.e. "spare them the pangs of wanderlust. Spare them the pangs of wanderlust and help them have a normal upbringing and to take up worthwhile work."(Season, 65) In so justifying their move by some kind of parental duty, Timi and Karabo are keen on shielding their children from the trauma of the South African experience. This experience can be examined in two directions, in the two personal itineraries of Timi and his son Felang.

CHAPTER SEVEN: 'THIS NO BE THEM COUNTRY'

MARGINALS IN SOMEONE ELSE'S COUNTRY

"I love Africa but, like Aunt Dora,
I like the person who likes me...."
(The Wanderers, 310)

The case of Timi Tabane is quite versatile for we can read in it the existence of a man who is subject to a double marginalisation: the first one in his home country, that is South Africa, and the other one, abroad, or more significantly in Africa where he thought he would be able to find a common heritage that would connect him to the other Negroes, especially in independent African countries.

In The Wanderers, Mphahlele explores several themes, among which a prevailing one is his criticism of neo-colonial Africa. After his escape from the claustrophobic atmosphere of South Africa, he takes refuge as an exile in Nigeria where he seems to enjoy this sense of freedom which he was denied back home. As Mphahlele told Lewis Nkosi in an interview published in 1964, one of the advantages of exile is that "you also find that you experience a sense of freedom which you never enjoyed when you were back in ... back home."(Nkosi, 1964, 8). This is echoed in The Wanderers when the narrator says,

> During those six months, Timi enjoyed the freedom of the day, of the night, void of tensions, or emotional upheavals or outbursts, free of the need to please the white man for a living or give an account of himself. He had the freedom of the streets, which he walked night and day, as if to tell himself that he was never going to surrender such freedom to anyone."(The Wanderers, 173).

Though he enjoys his new status this does not mean that Timi and his family are fully integrated. They are still the outsiders. When asked by Awoonor for instance to give his opinion about present local politics, he replies that it is too short a time for a stranger to understand local politics. Moreover the Tabane family are shown to live in a specific circle. To begin with they live in a reserved area called Bodija:

> Bodija is what used to be called the Government Reservation Area. A relic of the colonial days not so far off. Only colonial government servants, teachers in government schools used to live here. Now employees of oil companies, other teachers and professional men, both black and white, also live here and pay rent to the government. (The Wanderers, 169)

Then, their acquaintances are either other exiles and foreigners, or mixed couples who do not really represent the average African. After meeting Awoonor for the first time, the Tabanes are led into other connections "with Babs and his American wife Doris; Ladi and his American wife Frances; Aliyi and his English wife Florence, who had a distinctly Lancashire accent; and Ayo, a *Daily Speaker* reporter"(The Wanderers, 177). As we can see, the connections mentioned here are with been-to's and their foreign wives, these representing a type of exclusive relationship that is equally mentioned in Fragments as regards the acquaintances of Juana, the Puerto Rican psychiatrist in Accra.

Although on his arrival to Iboyoru he is able to befriend open-minded people such as Awoonor, Timi is conscious that he is a stranger in a foreign land. He is aware that he is only an exile in search of an asylum, and he identifies with the rest of the exiles who "want only temporary shelter and food" (The Wanderers, 211). This attitude is clearly reflected in a conversation, right after the military coup. Witnessing the turmoil following the deposition of Komo Batsia, the Iboyoru president, and the readiness of the crowd to destroy everything that is linked to the previous regime and its eagerness to welcome the new leader, Awoonor and Aliyi tell Timi and Karabo how "[o]nly eight years ago [...] we sang and danced when he (Batsia) was hoisted onto that stone (a statue of him)"(The Wanderers, 187).

In Timi's and Karabo's minds, it is the same demonstration of power as in South Africa, though under a different form, "except [Timi says] I'd still prefer to be a citizen of a troubled country than no citizen, being kicked around and jailed. Here, if I'm jailed, I know some of my people will stir things with a chance of success. [This is why Karabo adds] "life's still good to us here" (Wanderers,189). To her, they act like all exiles in the world :"When some are suffering, some are selfishly seeking a little corner of comfort for themselves, like us, I mean. Like all exiles in the world [... we] try to create a little comfort for our single selves and single families."(The Wanderers, 189).

As a matter of fact, in The Wanderers there are several exiles who are compelled 'to eat dung' in order to get, not education, but employment. Witness for instance the case of expatriate teachers who worked in private-owned bush-schools as Timi later learns:

> Some of the teachers found themselves in bush schools owned by private speculators. Toilet facilities were poor, the furniture was rickety. One teacher found there was no mosquito net and had to be sent back to South Africa with cerebral malaria. Some proprietors refused to give their expatriate

> staff leave pay or cunningly evaded payment, because they stole the money after the government had paid it in. Gama worked for such a proprietor.(The Wanderers, 245-6)

In addition to the relative powerlessness and defencelessness inherent to the expatriate's position, it is shown how some of these are unable to understand local customs and practices such as bribery, the question of stewards in the house, and also the way people are seen to quarrel with words only instead of using their fists as Timi suggests they do. This happens when, growing impatient with two men who were brandishing their hands at each other and were being supported orally by the surrounding onlookers, Timi "pushed the man nearest to him against the other, saying, 'Hit with a fist, man, get on with the fight!' propelling him towards his opponent. The man broke loose, leapt aside, and bolted into the crowd. All Timi heard from his lips was 'A-ah, what ees wrong!' which raised a loud laugh from the bystanders."(The Wanderers, 204-5).

Another more serious episode of this inability to understand local practices is to be found in the way Timi is confronted with an organized form of bribery in the civil service. While queueing at the traffic division to exchange his South African driving licence for an Iboyoru one, he is surprised to be approached by one man in the concourse who asks him "do you want a licence through the front door or would you like us to talk in my house? [...] If we talk at my house, you need only pay five pounds and the licence will be delivered promptly."(The Wanderers, 206). Naively thinking that the ten shilling standard fee would do the job, he is surprised when the traffic division clerk makes him a proposition similar to the previous one, telling him that because the city needs revenue, he will inevitably be failed at least ten times before he gets his licence, no matter how clever he is.

There are many things like this one which seem to irritate Timi and he clearly says he is growing impatient with them, this impatience being only a stage before he is able to adjust. There is however another issue that challenges him more profoundly; it is the question of whether or not to have a steward in the house. As one of his students asks to work for him as a steward, Timi is much perplexed. He takes him on however, persuading himself that he was a student who needed help. But the terms of the issue are still confused in his mind:

> He simply could not imagine a person working for him: washing, cleaning, handling his bodily dirt, waiting on him at table. How could he, whose mother had been a domestic servant for whites for all those years, take over the white man's role as a master? How could he look himself in the mirror after degrading himself like that? He could never think of a master-

> servant relationship as a normal one that could be tidy, clean.(The Wanderers, 197)

As 'Bayo Ogunjimi points out, there is in Timi too much of his South African background to allow him to adapt to normal West African behaviour. As Timi himself admits, "Always he thought of the white master and the black servant in South Africa. Why did he have to take a seat in the row of masters?"(The Wanderers, 199). Behind the emergence of his typical South African conditioning however, it appears that Timi is questioning the outcome of the newly-acquired Iboyoru independence. To him it is clear that if political independence has been achieved, there remains strong evidence of neo-colonial domination in the behaviour of Africans, both in West and East Africa.

One of the formulations of this state of marginality is exposed by Timi himself who recognizes the limitations of being an expatriate in one these African countries. He himself comes to the conclusion that there is

> No use in assuming an immediate common heritage among Negroes everywhere. You're an expatriate. Take your chances, tread softly, human cultures have stone walls. Find the crevice and dig your way through that and don't try to go farther than it allows you. Africa has several enclaves with walls around them and several crevices in the walls. Take your chances. But what are we seeking when we enter through the crevices? Maybe humanity must flow like water that cannot leave a crevice unflooded. Woe unto those whose crevices are few or who don't have any.(The Wanderers, 221)

The few crevices Timi is able to identify in the local culture are to be seen in the various tutors, a device that is also used in Armah's Fragments. Although the presence of a tutor is justified by the logical necessity of having a local to explain the customs to a foreigner, it is sometimes through foreigners and not locals that Timi learns of the local intricacies. As in Fragments, there are two groups of tutors: one is composed of Africans like Awoonor, Aliyi in Iboyoru, and Joe in Lao Kiku. The other is composed of white expatriates such as the Austrian Emil and the Englishman George Wingdon. Of Emil, Timi says he is not a retread, that is he does not live in the colonial shell:

> He had become part of the Iboyoru setting in a way only a few expatriates did. [...] He simply made friendships among those of his class among black and white without imposing himself on the indigenous people like one who might think he was doing them a favour. He was also studying the lore and history of the people of the Takora region of Iboyoru, the seat of an ancient culture... But he always knew when to come in, and then he threw himself into the work with resolve while some of the expatriates jeered and scoffed on the sidelines. Timi took his cue and Karabo's not to live in the faculty houses near

> the campus, but in town, where the regular classes were held in any case. (The Wanderers, 213-4)

He seemed to represent the antithesis of the 'white man's burden' type of white expatriate who had spent quite a long time devoting his energy and knowledge to the improvement of the life of Iboyoru people. His long presence in Iboyoru qualifies him to emit judgements on the various types of white (and black) people who are living there. On learning that Professor Myriam Graves, head of the English department at the Institute of Public Education, University of Takora, refused to employ Timi because he had a South African degree which, in her mind, was by far inferior to any English one, Emil is not at all surprised. He knows more about Miss Graves' attitude:

> 'You know what she said when we advised her that African literature should be studied in her department?' Emil remarked. 'What African literature is there to teach in university?' she said. So we do in our institute. She has her two or three Iboyoru protégés whom she has helped find scholarships and places in England for postgraduate study and the rumour is she's grooming them for her department. (The Wanderers, 213)

Awoonor and Aliyi are also the ones who are able to advise Timi and to reveal to him aspects of Iboyoru life that are unknown to him. When Timi is first confronted with the question of employing or not a steward, his first suggestion is that Karabo consults Awoonor's wife on her arrival. Awoonor is again the one who gives him advice when Timi is shocked by the behaviour of the *Daily Speaker*'s editor, Jakande, to whom he has submitted a series of articles about South Africa but who has remained extremely aloof:

> I know him from college. You remember that wave that carried Ladi so high? He's riding on the same kind of wave. See him in a few years when he flops down on the beach panting for help. Come the next revolution, his paper will either have to sing the government tune or he must get out. The *Speaker* goes the way the wind blows from State House. No guts, no balls of its own. (The Wanderers, 179)

Aliyi is also another Iboyoru who is going to supply Timi with as much information as possible. One such example is the story of Komo Batsia, the Iboyoru leader. Timi is given the details of his rule up to the present, that is when the *coup d'état* takes place, and Aliyi supplies him with some useful comments on the way people tend to behave whenever a dictatorial leadership is changed. As we notice Timi is the one who asks most of the questions whereas Aliyi and Awoonor provide the answers.

Even when Timi later moves to Lao Kiku, he also finds other people who are ready to volunteer more information. One of them is Joe, the first African to have befriended them, thus remaining a close friend of theirs.

The occasion on which Joe is given to play the role of the tutor is the Mayor's annual Party in Kambani City Hall to which a minority of black people are invited along with an outnumbering majority of whites. Joe reveals to him the name behind each guest's face, his function, and briefs him on the white/black relationships in Kambani. He puts a name to the face of the police captain, the owner of the big Manley Hotel, the German veterinary doctor, the Ismaili M.P., the Minister of Education, the Minister of Economic Affairs, and the Minister of State in charge of Pan African Affairs.

During this briefing, Joe and Timi stand apart as they are watching the guests. This is exactly the same situation as in Armah's Fragments before the literary evening starts at the Drama Studio. Both Juana and Baako arrive there quite early, and when they are joined by Lawrence Boateng, another friend of Juana, who suggests they "stay here (in the car park) a while and watch people arrive? I can give this stranger (Baako) my portraits of our local literary and artistic big shots."(Fragments, 107). And so he does. Janet and James Scalder, whom he calls the British Council married team, are the first victims of his witty description; then comes Asante-Smith, the head of Ghanavision, Akosua Russell, her Americano South African photographer and another person accompanying her whom he doesn't know but whom he identifies as one with the smile of foundation money and as being the main reason for the gathering.

Not content with just saying "who's who and what is what," Lawrence introduces comments for the benefit of Baako to give him a quick picture of the person through the use of anecdotes. It is a similar device that is used in The Wanderers when Awoonor, Aliyi and Joe initiate Timi to their respective countries.

While drawing a sarcastic picture of Akosua Russell who passes as the leading writer in Ghana, Lawrence Boateng reveals to Baako how the foundation money she raises is appropriated by her for private use instead of her channelling it towards the encouragement of emerging writers. Although these introductions to Ghanaian cultural life are for the attention of Baako who is said to be the stranger, it is with the figures of Ocran and Juana that we can read the inability to identify with a cause associated with the inability/impossibility of taking action, of reaching some form of real commitment. For Ocran though, he was at this same place eight years previously when the Drama Studio was opened, Akosua Russell's pseudo literary game is no longer worth the candle. Therefore he has decided that

he should watch only, instead of wasting his energy opposing Akosua Russell. He has come, through the years, to embrace some form of resigned realism which one can understand when he scolds Lawrence Boateng for quarreling with Akosua Russell:

> your attacks on Akosua Russell are just stupid. All she's done is to find a way to make some money without working. She's no writer and she knows it. She doesn't really care. She has the things she wants. If you want to compete with her and be a pimp, go ahead. But if you want to be serious, decide what your art is, and just go ahead with it. We aren't so full of energy, are we, so why waste so much of it fighting her? It's no waste to her; she does nothing anyhow.(Fragments, 117)

Juana and Baako have come to the same conclusion. For the former there is not much you can find in this kind of literary soirée. As she has warned Baako before going to the Drama Studio, "you're expecting to find something there [...]. I've been to something like that here, once [...]. The imitation looked very similar, identical, almost, except that where you have the mask there was a linguist's staff that time."(Fragments, 105).

In so retreating within their own solitude, Armah's protagonists have something in common with at least one of Mphahlele's characters, Emil. Timi says of him that he was the kind of expatriate who did not have a neurotic and clumsy sense of belonging to a white group. This is also confirmed by Emil's intimacy with another white Austrian woman expatriate devoted to Africa, Irmelin. As Timi notes, Emil visited her often:

> She was also Austrian by origin. Nobody else seemed to be able to fathom the intimacy that was obvious between herself and Emil [...]. And yet with her deeper involvement in the local cult, she came to have less and less to do with the world and material things. The enlightened African, such as Emil rubbed shoulders with every day in his work and social life, did not interest her. In any case, such an African would not overtly keep shrines in his house or go out to the communal shrine.
> As a priestess, and in the sculpture she produced to revive a defunct historical shrine, Irmelin worked with all those people who were in touch with the basic realities in life, and whose religious beliefs were not cluttered by theological argument and sermonizing.(The Wanderers, 234-5)

It is with his kind of resigned realism that Emil can be identified with Ocran. While being as devoted as Irmelin, "He had earned himself an honourable place among the Iboyorus. He worked like an ant, silently. Bakare wanted a pliable staff. Emil, without being a stooge, simply did his work and relegated politics to the pigsty, as he put it."(The Wanderers, 256). While devoting himself to his work Emil is capable of precise analysis. This is why when Timi comes to work for Bakare and starts having problems with

him, Emil is the one who is able to give him sound advice by drawing him a true picture of his boss :

> There are people [...] who would rather listen to advice when it's offered by a white man than by another black man, black like themselves. It makes me blush to say it, Timi, but it's unfortunately true.[...]
> This is one of the reasons why Emil seldom advised anybody. He listened and nodded his shaggy head; when advice was expected, he just smiled. Timi thought that this was how Emil survived several shocks.(The Wanderers, 257)

Be it Emil, Awoonor, Aliyi, or Joe, the various tutors we encounter in The Wanderers, not unlike Lawrence Boateng in Fragments, are quite facetious. They tend to present everything through the smile of an anecdote, a forced smile that reveals a deeper disillusionment with the realities they describe.

All the tutors we are referring to are most of the time placed in a specific and privileged position. To begin with they are the real insiders who know what they are talking about from within. Lawrence Boateng for example is a man of letters and the editor of a literary magazine, a fact that gives force to his judgements on Akosua Russell and the world of culture in Ghana in general. Aliyi, Emil, and Joe are university people and intellectuals who have a first-hand knowledge of the political realities they describe. The other characteristic as we have seen is that they often stand apart, that is if they mix with the people they describe, they do it very cautiously, keeping in mind that they do not want to have anything in common with them. Awoonor and Aliyi, while witnessing the crowd break the statue of Komo Batsia, look at the scene from the balcony of their flat. Lawrence Boateng looks at the Ghanaian leading men of culture from the car park of the Drama Studio from a similarly withdrawn position.

Besides their adopting a specific and retreated position and their wanting to introduce the strangers to the reality of their respective countries, they also have a particular common idea in mind, which is to criticize the world they are describing. For Lawrence Boateng, while making fun of the British Council attaché, of Asante-Smith, or of Akosua Russell, his concern is to denounce the cultural policy and situation of Ghana. For Awoonor and Aliyi, ridiculing Komo Batsia or laughing at the crowd is only black humour. They actually are disillusioned with the political leadership and the behaviour of the masses. The same remarks also apply to Joe, except that his criticism is meant in the context of Lao Kiku.

The nature of this criticism is well defined by Juana when she advises Lawrence Boateng to stick to facts only, without letting his own comments prejudice the presentation. His persistent sarcasm makes her wonder why he keeps being so aggressive :

> Juana thought of the young man Boateng and the way he talked: wildly, as though he had made a conscious decision to keep touching with his words the deep bottom of things no one else wanted to think about. Was this erratic sharpness just something wild and random, or a deliberately disordered keenness? (Fragments, 108)

In his bitterness, Lawrence does not see the surface of things, but he consciously looks deeper. Behind the couple of the British Council, Janet and James Scalder, whom he refers to as the "Cultural Empire Loyalists," he identifies an unsuccessful couple: "She married him seven years ago because she thought she'd found the greatest Shakespearean actor of modern times in him."(Fragments, 108). Their yearly stageing of *Julius Caesar* becomes a ridiculous performance which constitutes simply a way of avoiding reality. Asante-Smith is being careful tonight according to Lawrence; he is only with two girls this time. This comment gives the head of Ghanavision the reputation of a skirt-hunter which he apparently fully deserves. But Lawrence's criticism climaxes in the way he introduces Akosua Russell. She is a leading writer but "don't ask me what she has written. I don't know and nobody cares". [She edits *Kyerema*, the country' s most prestigious literary quarterly, but] it is only supposed to come out about once every two years."(Fragments, 109). The reason is that Akosua Russell uses for private purposes the funds she collects from foundations such as tonight's Doctor Calvin Bird's. And it is in order to point out the hypocrisy of such a literary soirée that Juana thinks, while listening to Akosua Russell's speech :

> Her speech was long, and most of it, from her first literary evening, was familiar to Juana. To make it pass more quickly she tried to think of the words as they would strike a person hearing them for the first time in his life: what kind of meaning, she wondered, would Baako get from the long tale of efforts put into the development of an indigenous literature as well as an indigenous art, the two going inseparably hand in hand?(Fragments, 110)

Further exposed by Akosua Russell's snubbing a student who wants to start writing, thinking that this soirée was the place, the cultural 'circus' is denounced by Lawrence Boateng who readily jettisons his writing career prospects in a fit of anger:

> He wants to write, he can't find anyone. This is called a workshop and this boy can't come and learn, so what do you say to that? [...] Nobody meets to discuss real writing anymore.

> This has become a market where we're all sold. We're confused. There's money for this and that. Grants and so forth, but who swallows all this money? Everybody says it secretly, but I'm tired of secrets and whispers.(Fragments, 115)

It is also what everybody talks secretly about that Awoonor and the others refer to. As Timi says, "Batsia did other things which the literate class of people like Ladi, Aliyi, Awoonor, Babs, and so on criticized among themselves."(The Wanderers, 182). While acknowledging that Komo Batsia deserved his title of the *Peacemaker of Iboyoru* - he had brought nationalism, independence, peace, and had put an end to tribal and ethnic wars - he did many other things which are much less commendable. His megalomaniac instincts are reflected in his statue erected in front of Parliament buildings, in the international hotel specially built for foreign guests of the government and in his renovation of the old castle[2]: "he had the old castle renovated and furnished expensively that had once held slaves before they were shipped across the Atlantic, to use as his State House."(The Wanderers, 182). And to crown it all, he had married the daughter of an Arab oil potentate in the Middle East. This marriage is the pretext for the narrator to reproduce the popular gossip. As he says, "People in bars, on the beach, at the market, in night clubs voiced their amazement in different ways at the Peacemaker's marriage"(The Wanderers, 183), but also their awareness of his dictatorial kind of rule, this culminating in a *coup d'état* that deposes Komo Batsia while he is on a state visit to Indonesia[3]. To Awoonor who watches the subsequent turmoil and tells Aliyi that the crowd is happy-looking, the latter replies: "Africa has always died to the rhythm of its own dance and song and laughter"(186). While he sees people bash down Batsia's statue with a sledgehammer he remembers that

> Only five years ago, [...] we marched and danced when he was hoisted onto that stone. Have you ever seen so many sculptors on the same job before? Would you be surprised if he came back and ruled again and the same people laughed and cheered him back onto a new pedestal? I wouldn't be! (The Wanderers, 187)

In so revealing the deep bottom of things which people usually do not think about, Awoonor and Aliyi share the same disillusionment as Joe in Kambani. While the latter is with Timi and Karabo at the Mayor's Annual Party, he reveals to them how the invitations are handled, the deeds of the police captain, the discriminatory practices of the owner of the Manley Hotel, and the story behind the Ismailis' forced integration. His indictment however is directed more at the people in power and two of the guests in

particular: the Minister of Education and the Minister of Pan-African Affairs. To him both of them are totally incompetent. The latter, the

> priceless, inimitable Minister of State in the President's office in charge of Pan-African affairs is a person you cannot arrange an appointment with. He sleeps most of the time, while the African storms are raging. He smiles his way through Pan-African affairs and the Minister of Economic Affairs is the only one who makes statements on Africa just when they're expected. (The Wanderers, 272)

The same thing is true for the Minister of Education who "knows as much about education as there is in a chicken's arsehole. His education officers and permanent secretaries cart sixty-year-old mouldy colonial files about and think they're managing our education efficiently". (The Wanderers, 272).

This common concern which makes the tutors/witnesses see things in depth, renders them unable to give the focal figures detached comments. All of them seem to come to the conclusion that 'The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born'. As Awoonor says about the 'political circus', "Today we sing and march and set up one tin-god, tomorrow we tear him down and sing and march and hoist anoder in his place. Just as we reject some of our ritual gods and replace dem with dose we think are useful and bring us greater material welfare" (The Wanderers,169). To him the problem comes from the people not being interested in the processes of government. Political matters are to them of lesser importance than material welfare and tribal connections.

A similar commitment is voiced in Timi when he raises educational issues. For instance, answering Awoonor's question as to how to give the schooling of children and students an Iboyoru character, Timi replies that the solution is in the creation of a powerful teachers' organisation, a powerful body that would not just discuss salaries, but reassess the system, turn it inside out in order to establish new standards to replace those of Britain or France. However, recognizing the passionate character of his outburst, he admits that after all he would not be understood:

> ...I'm an expatriate. In a few years time it won't be just revolutionary - it will be the only thing sensible we could possibly have done. [...]
> And what power did he represent? None. He was not even sure that he knew the problems of Iboyoru sufficiently to suggest a single remedy. He was a black foreigner, and could only talk to a man like Awoonor who could not possibly mistake his inquiring habit for the arrogance of an alien. (The Wanderers, 203)

His passion in educational matters arises again when he moves to another job as this is shown in his writing a memorandum to his boss, Olun Bakare, suggesting changes so as to provide more opportunities for adult education.

In this memorandum Timi criticizes his boss Bakare for his conservatism in educational matters. In Timi's mind the students need more incentive to come to classes, something that would lead them towards a high certificate for example and that would represent a tangible achievement which would encourage them to go ahead to university. His larger preoccupation is with the setting of better opportunities of high-school studies schemes for adults.

Whereas Emil is not surprised by the deaf ear Bakare turns to such ideas, Timi is constantly in search of a crevice, as he puts it, to his impatient concern. The channel which allows him to express his views is the question of education, and whenever educational issues are raised in his presence, we see that Timi becomes passionate. This committed concern can be seen in two cases; one is Timi's answer to Awoonor, the other his reply to the colonial condescension of Miss Graves.

Answering for instance Awoonor's concern of Africanisation of education, Timi identifies the obstacles as follows:

> Often he became impatient with the orthodox, stick-in-the-mud ideas that were peddled by university authorities who came from the institutions of the Old World. He had striven through his education independently of old world theory and practice. Yet he recognized the cold fact that these theories and practices were backed by power: the power that came with money that came as aid, the power that came in the form of personnel that in turn created the old world presence or entrenched it. (The Wanderers, 203)

Two of such university authorities have already been mentioned in the persons of Miss Graves, and Bakare, who are both convinced that "any degree that's not British is inferior"(213). Here is for example how the mental pigeonholing attitude of Miss Graves is expressed when, after she has examined Timi's application for a teaching post, she tells him:

> if a thesis like this were written for a British University it simply wouldn't have passed... Of course I realize that you've done all your studies as an external student and in a country like South Africa where black people are underprivileged and cannot have good libraries, so for the university of South Africa the thesis was good enough. (The Wanderers, 212)

Both she and Bakare are of the opinion that there is not enough African literature nor it is worth teaching at the university. It is only when he moves to Lao Kiku, East Africa, that he meets someone like Professor George Wingdon, and discovers that some devoted white foreigners are doing more to promote the study of Africa and African literature than Africans themselves. George Wingdon is therefore described as a wonderful fellow, forward-looking and ready to experiment. Timi recognizes that he is among the exceptions for he has managed to introduce at university level "a whole paper on African

literature in the honours syllabuses."(The Wanderers, 271).

As far as Timi is concerned, it does not come as a surprise that he feels marginalised in a foreign country. Despite the high hopes that he carried away with him as he flew South Africa, there are various hints in the narrative that tend to indicate how unsuccessful he is going to be. The problems he is having with his son are one of such indicators. Another one is to be found in the role of the white expatriates he gets acquainted with, either in Iboyoru or in Lao Kiku, that is namely Emil, Irmelin, and George Wingdon.

Like him, they are living in a foreign country; but unlike him, they have managed to become more integrated, especially for Irmelin and Emil. They are able to feel at home in Iboyoru as their unbiased interest in local customs and arts shows. As they are forced to leave the country after a growing political turmoil and ethnic rivalries, they meet Timi in Kambani and acknowledge that, like him, they do not consider the idea of returning home to Austria. Instead of saying that they would feel useless there, Emil indirectly explains that there is more vitality outside Austria.

For Emil and Irmelin who are Westerners, the South has become home. This theme of the place of exile that becomes home is also to be found in Abrahams' A Wreath for Udomo, with one of the leading figures in particular, i.e. Tom Lanwood. In his journey to the North, it is precisely the North that has become home, as distinct from a place of exile.

In The Wanderers, Timi Tabane has illustrated his disillusionment with African independence in the episode that opposed him to his head of department to whom he applied for a job. The fact that she questions the validity of his degree makes him think that "the white man knows that the whites will still direct affairs in a way that will make the blackman's political power only *seem* real and far-reaching."(The Wanderers, 309). It is this impression too that Udomo has as he becomes Prime Minister of Panafrica. He knows that although the country is formally independent, a new form of colonial subservience has insidiously taken place. As his friend Adebhoy later reveals, the ideals of the revolution have been betrayed. In his mind

> Sure we are Ministers. The cabinet's ours. We sign the laws. But white men rule all the big construction and industrialisation projects. They control us with their money and you know it. That's why you have shut your eyes to their clubs for whites only. Everywhere in the land, in factories, on building and construction projects, where roads are being made, whites give the orders and the blacks do the work.(Udomo, 299-300)

It is not our concern to deal with the perception of independences *per se* as it appears in African Literature[4]. However,it should be pointed that the subsequent disillusionment shared by African intellectuals is one of the symptoms announcing the emergence of the outsider. In the case of A Wreath for Udomo for example Abrahams portrays three major outsiders - who serve as yardstick to gauge the degree of success of the been-to's return - and describes them in unequal length. The three characters in question are respectively Tom Lanwood, Paul Mabi and Michael Udomo.

Tom Lanwood is the point of focus when the narration starts and he is described as being Udomo's "political god". In his eyes, Lanwood represents the model and the veteran who has reached an encompassing view of all aspects of the colonial question. In this phase where he discovers Lanwood, Udomo is excited and awe-stricken. But his admiration does not last very long as he comes to see the real Lanwood.

This emerging disappointment can be read in Udomo's description of the leader. Whereas the first picture he saw of him showed the stern face of a leader of men, not well dressed and in any case not aristocratic, the one he saw now was wearing "thick rimmed glasses that enhanced his air of intellectuality. His dress was impeccably correct and English: just the right amount of shirt-cuff showed at his wrists; tie harmonised with shirt, and both with the immaculately cut suit." (Udomo, 20)

There is here a sharp contrast between the image of Lanwood Udomo had in mind and the reality as described in the passage last quoted. In his mind, Udomo imagined a thinner man, more preoccupied with the practical issues of the African revolution than with physical appearance. He also thought he would meet a younger man, who would be living according to principles that would be dictated by some kind of Africanness. But as the description shows, Lanwood has grown fat, is getting used to the pleasures of city life and has become the perfect image of a "prosperous West End clubman," an image which stands in sharp contrast with the stern face of the leader of men Udomo saw on one of Lanwood's photographs ten years earlier. Set against this declining figure of the aging leader, Udomo, as we have seen earlier, emerges as the exceptional one. As Lois put it, he becomes the object of the group's "hero-worship". The gradual marginalisation of the inefficient old leader is set in parallel with the gradual rise to leadership - and to power - of the young Udomo.

This process of role-swapping is carried further as Lanwood, Mhendi and Mabi later arrive in Panafrica a year after Udomo and are welcomed with all

the honours due to their role in the preparation of the Panafrican "bloodless revolution". To begin with, as soon as Lanwood arrives, he is overcome and moved to the tears. To him, this represents a dream come true.

To Lanwood the liberation of Panafrica is bound to have a snowball effect and to eventually lead to the liberation of the entire African continent. In his view, it is taking place exactly as he described it in his books. As Udomo tells the cheering crowd, "here is my friend, one of our greatest political teachers, Tom Lanwood. You all know his name. You've all read his novels. He has given our generation the words of freedom."(Udomo, 189). Overwhelmed by joy, Lanwood begins a speech but Udomo interrupts him discreetly. Udomo's intervention here during which he cuts him short, not only indicates his desire to keep things under control, but also his calculated distancing of himself from Lanwood. As he does not want the old leader to overshadow him, he is gradually pushing him to a marginal position. Though I tend to think that this is part of Udomo's machiavellian scheming - which will be found again in his integrating Mabi and again in his betrayal of Mhendi - one of the reasons for Lanwood's marginalisation is adequately expressed by Selina. Though she knows that he is of her country, she feels that he has been away too long: "All day I have watched him. It was like watching a white man with a black skin. He is too old to change. As you say he stayed away too long. He will never come back to us. He is lost to us."(193). As a consequence she does not treat him in the same way as she treats Mhendi. Though the latter is a foreigner from Pluralia, he is said to be "of the blood of Africa". He is immediately engaged in the preparation of the fight for the liberation of his country. Both Mhendi and Lanwood show their impatience to take part in action, but if Mhendi is promptly helped to reach Pluralia and undertake guerrilla action, it is not the case with Lanwood. His impatience to occupy a key-post in the new government - like the one later offered to Mabi - is answered by Udomo's evasiveness. As Lanwood senses this uneasiness, he comes to the conclusion that he is a total outsider. Unlike Mabi who represents the mountain people who must be won from Udomo's political opponent, Dr Endura, Lanwood understands that he represents nobody: "... I represent nobody [...]. I am the creole whose people were transported, and although he came back, doesn't belong any more. And I've given all my life to the struggle." (203-4). Not only are his views not compatible with those of the party executive, but they are no longer in touch with the African reality as his remark on the expected results of Africanisation proves. Therefore, as Udomo is both unable and unwilling to provide him with a worthwhile occupation, Lanwood becomes a background

figure noticed only by Mabi. And although the latter tries to cheer him up, Lanwood has the courage to face reality.

In his words he has had, during the past couple of weeks which he spent touring the country in the company of Udomo, "a chance to see that the real Africa is not the Africa I wrote about in my books. [...] I do not understand this tribal business and I do not want to."(241). The only way out for him is a return to London. As he is subsequently heading towards the shipping office to get a passage to London,

> He knew suddenly that he would always be an outsider here. For all his dark skin the barrier between him and this world was too great, he was too old to make the crossing successfully. He belonged too firmly, had lived too long in the Western world to be any good in any other. (Udomo, 257)

The world he is going to is referred to as *home*. The thirty years he has spent there are too important to be wiped out so easily. He is feeling homesick for London, and as he crosses the outskirts of the city which becomes an alien and hostile world, his state of mind is reflected in oppressive physical sensations. The heat and the glare of the sun are too much for him. As he passes two men piddling in the open gutter, he becomes aware of the strong stench of the piddle. The outskirts of the town are drab and so are its people, and the market women selling fly-ridden wares.

As he gets ready to go, he acknowledges he is made up of key inheritances "a complex inheritance of which the land of his birth and training is perhaps the most important." (258). He is the cultural exile whose colour is not, as he says, an automatic passport to Africa. The preceding description of Lanwood stresses the fact that he now belongs nowhere. Like Mustafa Sa'eed in Season, who was part of the London intelligentsia and was acquainted with influential people there, Lanwood is also referred to as a clubman, a socius in the West End part of London.

MARGINALS IN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES

- the passive outsiders.

In Season there is a group of three characters that can be seen as the representation of outsiders: Hosna bint Mahmoud, Mustafa Sa'eed, and Mihaimid. Their marginality is best read in their relationship to the village community and to the various traditional characters i.e. Hajj Ahmed, Wad Rayyes, and Mahjoub mainly, this before and during the period that follows the murder of Wad Rayyes and Hosna's death. As for Mihaimid, unlike the other two outsiders, he is given to go through a purgatorial phase symbolized by the purification scene in the Nile.

The process whereby Mihaimid becomes an outsider can be illustrated in his evolution, starting from his arrival on his return from England. The first lines of the novel indicate how happy he is to return to his people: "The important thing is that I returned with a great yearning for my people in that small village at the bend of the Nile"(Season, 1). After an absence of seven years the prodigal son returned is given an extremely warm welcome, so warm that "it was not long before I felt as though a piece of ice were melting inside of me, as though I were some frozen substance on which the sun had shone - that life warmth of the tribe which I had lost for a time"(1). Mihaimid feels he is revived and he is undergoing, as we have said earlier, a kind of resurrection that makes him think: "I felt not like a storm-swept feather but like that palm tree, a being with a background, with roots, with a purpose" (2).

One of the figures symbolizing Mihaimid's rooting in this traditional milieu is his grandfather Hajj Ahmed. Mihaimid has great respect for him because the old man incarnates the secular tradition in Sudan, its popular and religious beliefs, as well as its traditional background and wisdom. Nahmad Nasr, in his approach to Salih's work suggests that Salih considers him as an institution:

> This suggestion is strengthened by the way the grandfather is described. He is tall like a palm tree whose roots strike down into the ground. He is so tall that everybody in the village has to look up to him when addressing him. His bending down to enter a house is likened to the bending of the river at Wad Hamid village. His tall stature and soft white beard and string of prayer beads remind us of Al-Hanin and Wad Hamid. The grandfather, though old, is still strong and can 'spring in the twilight of dawn.' He is therefore the symbol of the stable society founded in popular Islam. He could actually survive despite plagues, famines, wars, and the corruption of rulers. (Nasr, 1980, 94)

In telling how he feels really at home in Wad Hamid, Mihaimid reveals the extent to which he loves his grandfather: "I go to my grandfather and he talks to me of life forty years ago, fifty years ago, even eighty, and my feeling of security is strengthened. I loved my grandfather and it seems that he was fond of me" (5).

After Mihaimid gets involved in the affairs of the dead Mustafa Sa'eed, and is in charge of his widow and children, he is asked by his grandfather to help decide Hosna to marry the old Wad Rayyes. Hajj Ahmed intervenes with Mihaimid to persuade her to marry his old friend: "She listens to what you say. If you were to talk to her she might agree"(86). When Mihaimid protests that "Wad Rayyes is forty years older than her" the grandfather replies that "Wad Rayyes was still sprightly, that he was comfortably off and that he was

sure her father would not oppose it"(86). This insistence angers Mihaimid: "The rage in my heart grew more savage- unable to remain, I left; behind me I heard my grandfather calling but I did not turn round"(86-7).

The argument with his grandfather about Wad Rayyes's right to marry the widowed Hosna, and the argument with Mahjoub are two of the indicators Muhammad Siddiq suggests that they illustrate the emergence of Mihaimid as an outsider and his asserting his own individuality:

> For the grandfather, for Mahjoub, for the village, and especially for the narrator at the beginning, everything that belongs to the village is, by that very fact, morally good; everything else, according to this parochial moral code, is never good enough even when it is irreproachable.
> The narrator's blind subscription to this flagrantly provincial morality begins to falter when he is first able to discern the universal stamp of evil in different guises and in different places. (Siddiq, 1978, 93)

Another indication is given later when Hosna is forced to marry Wad Rayyes. She kills him and herself while Mihaimid is away in Khartoum. It is Mahjoub who sends him a cable. As soon as he arrives, he is impatient to find out what everybody else knows, but nobody is willing to inform him: his grandfather Hajj Ahmed remains silent, while Mahjoub holds him responsible for the 'calamity'. He is obliged to bribe Bint Majzoub with a bottle of whisky to get a complete report of the events.

On his arrival this time, unlike other times, he remarks no one has come to meet him, except for Mahjoub: "I stepped ashore and Mahjoub shook my hand, avoiding me with his eyes; he was the only one who had come to meet me. He was embarrassed, as though feeling guilty about something or as though he were putting the responsibility on to me"(120).

He goes to the village and finds Bint Majzoub who recounts to him the whole story and concludes that it is something so shameful that it has to be hidden and forgotten for ever. In her words, "the thing done by Hosna Bint Mahmoud is not easily spoken of . It is something we have never seen or heard in times past or present" (Season,124). As Kambal confirms, "Husna's action has now made her, like Mustafa Sa'eed, an outsider so that her action is deplored by the village and attacked as something threatening the life of the village" (Kambal,159-60). He learns that both Hosna and Wad Rayyes are denied normal burial and funeral ceremony. Mahjoub forbade the women to mourn and threatened death to anyone who would dare to do so. No funeral ceremony can be held under these circumstances. As he tells Mihaimid, "We buried them without fuss, first thing in the morning ... We told the women

not to mourn. We held no funeral ceremony and informed no one- the police would have come along and there would have been all the scandal of an investigation." (121-2).

Following this "great catastrophe which has befallen the village"(128), everything is upset: Hajj Ahmed swears continuously, Mihaimid's uncle Abdul-Karim quarrels with Bakri, except for Mabrouka, Wad Rayyes's eldest wife who supports Hosna's action, and of course Mihaimid's.

In Mahjoub's mind, Mihaimid should have accepted to marry Hosna in the first place, and this would have prevented this catastrophe from happening. Therefore he not only thinks that Mihaimid is responsible for it, but he also assimilates him with Hosna. As he reports to him, "she came to your father and her very words were 'Tell him to marry me!' What an impudent hussy! That's modern women for you!"(123).

In the opinion of Kambal (1984), Hosna's death is highly significant for it symbolizes the beginning of the transition between tradition and modernization of the village. Not only is she faced with the strong tradition of the community, therefore leaving her no choice than killing herself to defend her right, but she decides to die, thus defying the whole system of the village and asserting her own individuality. In fact the reader is made to understand that her death is also the outcome of her relationship with Mustafa Sa'eed who has transformed her into a new woman.

The reaction of the village is symbolized in the scene where Mahjoub is trying to separate a 'shoot' from the mother date palm. Mihaimid seeks him out and finds him busy working in the fields:

> I found Mahjoub mud-bespatched, his body naked except for the rag around his middle, moist with sweat, trying to separate a shoot from the mother date palm. I did not greet him and he did not turn to me but went on digging round the shoot. I remained standing, watching him.(Season, 130).

After his altercation with Mahjoub the narrator understands that he is being marginalized. As Kambal writes,

> The narrator in fact, invites the reader to speculate about his own precarious position in the village. He is almost isolated from the village, alienated and disillusioned with his people who keep him out of the affairs of the village because it has its own wisdom and could never risk its integrity conniving at things that endanger its safety. Hence the narrator must come to terms with the group or otherwise his fate will be like that of the 'shoot'... They can dispose of him.(Kambal, 1984, 164)

Here Mihaimid is presented as an individual fighting against the traditional communal values of the village. He sees Mahjoub swear at the small palm tree, throwing away the cigarette he has just offered him. Mahjoub's response not only signifies the rejection by the community of Hosna's action, but also the rejection of anyone who sympathizes with her. And this includes even Bint Majzoub who, though she deplores Hosna's action, is cursed by Mahjoub when he realizes it is she who informed the narrator about the details of the catastrophe. Feeling that there is a symbolic identification between himself and the shoot, Mihaimid says :

> I took my cares off to the trunk of a nearby palm against which I rested my head. There is no room for me here. Why don't I pack up and go? Nothing astonishes these people. They take everything in their stride. They neither rejoice at birth nor are saddened at a death. When they laugh they say 'I ask forgiveness of God' and when they weep they say 'I ask forgiveness of God'. Just that. And I, what have I learnt? They have learnt silence and patience from the river and from the trees. And I, what have I learnt?.(Season , 130, emphasis mine)

Not satisfied with Mahjoub's easy way out, Mihaimid becomes attuned to the differences between the demands of his consciousness and what the villagers will settle for. This opposition is illustrated in the above passage in the antonymy between the personal pronoun 'I' and the collective 'they'. Feeling isolated in his grief over Hosna's death, he comes close to killing his friend Mahjoub over the question of the sanity or insanity of Hosna. This incident demonstrates his readiness to defend his solitary views against the collective judgement of those who mean most to him: his family, his friends, and the villagers.

Therefore it is not surprising that Mihaimid is not only rejected by Mahjoub but he has also created a gap between his grandfather and himself. Not only does he confront Mahjoub physically - their discussion ends up in a fight - but he also confronts his grandfather verbally, a person with whom he used to experience a special closeness. In an analysis of both incidents, Kambal comments that "in confronting his grandfather verbally, and Mahjoub physically, the narrator in fact reinforces his mental renunciation of the civilization of the village. This confrontation is, indeed, essential for the narrator and represents his partial break with the society..."(Kambal, 1984, 166-7).

This confrontation with Mahjoub takes another dimension however. In fact, Mihaimid is shown to be confronted with his various selves: the one he could have become, who could have stayed in Wad Hamid and not pursued his studies any further, like Mahjoub, and the one who has taken the privileged place he was expected to hold in the village, like Mustafa Sa'eed.

Mahjoub and Mihaimid are of the same age-group. They went to the same school; and although as the narrator admits " he was more clever than I," he decided to leave school early and they went their separate ways. Here is, in a condensed form, the comparative evolution of each of them:

> I went my own way and Mahjoub turned into a real power in the village, so that today he has become the Chairman of the Agricultural Project Committee and the Cooperative, and a member of the committee of the hospital that is almost finished. He heads every delegation which goes to the provincial centre to take up instances of injustice. With independence Mahjoub became one of the local leaders of the National Democratic Socialist Party. We would occasionally chat about our childhood in the village and he would say to me, 'But look where you are and where I am. You've become a senior civil servant and I'm a farmer in this god-forsaken village.(Season, 98-9)

Despite this apparent expression of humility on the part of Mahjoub, he nevertheless remains the one in control because he is in tune with the tradition of the village. Though he envies Mihaimid for working in the capital, he is one of the real decision-makers in the village. It is he who forbids people to bury Hosna and Wad Rayyes. It is he who is able to advise Mihaimid on how to behave. While discussing for instance Hosna's being obliged to accept a marriage proposition according to the customary law, Mihaimid maintains that this kind of practice belongs to the past. To which Mahjoub replies :

> The world hasn't changed as much as you think. Some things have changed - pumps instead of water-wheels, iron ploughs instead of wooden ones, sending our daughters to school, radios, cars, learning to drink whisky and beer instead of arak and millet wine - yet even so everything's as it was. The world will really have changed when the likes of me become ministers in the government. And naturally that is an out and out impossibility. (Season, 99-100)

By telling the narrator about the real life in the village, Mahjoub implies that he sees and understands better than him. This is also his intent when he advises him to marry the widowed Hosna: "Don't tell me ... that you're already a husband and a father. Every day men are taking second wives. You wouldn't be the first or the last"(103).

He who has gained a doctorate has only become , in his own words, " a civil servant of no consequence" whereas Mahjoub is seen to represent one of the legal heirs of authority. This comparison with a local man, a childhood friend of his, leaves Mihaimid aside. But his marginalization however becomes more serious when his achievements as the most outstanding son of the village are contrasted with those of the stranger Mustafa Sa'eed.

This marginalization is manifest in the role reversal that occurs between Mihaimid and Mustafa. The latter has settled in Wad Hamid during Mihaimid's absence. He resides there permanently and takes part in the daily life of the village by helping reorganize its agriculture and economy. He has gained the esteem of the village and his death is seen as being an irreparable loss. As opposed to him, Mihaimid, despite his doctorate, has been teaching in a secondary school and is now only inspector of elementary education (Incidentally, it must be stressed that the overseas achievements of Mustafa Sa'eed are not of primary concern here. These have been dealt with as belonging to a parenthesis in his life, therefore being of no relevance in this section). He spends two months a year in Wad Hamid and he is not enough in contact with the local people. He is compared to the 'shoot', that is a useless parasite. Identical examples can be found in some of the other novels. For instance this is the case in Armah's Fragments where, for reasons of uselessness, Baako, the central figure in the novel, is separated from the rest of society by being locked up in a mental hospital.

Another process of exclusion/marginalisation is illustrated in L'Aventure Ambiguë. Although Samba Diallo goes overseas at the instigation of his family, he nevertheless becomes excluded form the society of the Diallobé as his return proves to be a failure. In order to illustrate the various degrees of autonomy of the outsiders, we propose to contrast the behaviour of Samba Diallo with that of two other characters: Mujungu in Africa Answers Back and Tanhoé Bertin in Un Nègre à Paris. Samba Diallo is the object of a set of forces; the other two, Tanhoé Bertin and Abala Stanley Mujungu, are subjects. Samba Diallo is not in control whereas the other two are, although paradoxically it is Samba Diallo who has gone to Paris with the specific aim of taking control of his own destiny. His problem lies in feeling an outsider in both societies, whereas Tanhoé Bertin and Abala Stanley Mujungu are absolutely secure in their own. They are outsiders on their own terms.

Though Samba Diallo and Mujungu started off their respective journeys at the instigation of their parents - therefore being someone else's objects - Mujungu soon becomes subject by taking his education under his control. Unlike Samba Diallo who is unable to make up his own mind - he is constantly under the influence of a tutor - Mujungu fights his way through and refuses all forms of tutorship, including that of the Reverend. For his part, Tanhoé Bertin is completely independent. He does not rely on any tutor or adviser; though there are things he does not understand during his stay in Paris, he appeals to his own faculty to judge and criticize.

Nyabongo's novel shows three forms of outsiders in action. They are respectively represented by the missionary, chief Ati, and Mujungu himself. The Reverend is a Protestant missionary who represents the foreign eye. He is the expression of the white man's burden in Africa. However, he is treated as the unsuccessful outsider because we are given to notice his hypocritical behaviour. Under the false pretence of helping Africans and "mak[ing] them more valuable to Africa" (Africa, 118), he wants the African children of his school to learn more "civilized" ways.

The other representation of the outsider is chief Ati. After he has taken part in the war, he comes back to his village, and Mujungu is born. His wives notice the peculiarity of his behaviour: he forgets the customs and wants to choose the name for the newborn boy. He is also an outsider because he admits that he cannot judge a new situation when faced with the question of the new religion. He tells the Reverend that Mujungu is going to choose in his place. He therefore acknowledges his own ignorance and shifts the responsibility onto Mujungu's shoulders.

The outstanding outsider however is to be found in the character of Mujungu. He is able to cast a critical eye on the religious teachings of the Reverend and at the same time to initiate reforms in his own traditional society. His inability to adapt to the Protestant school rules shows his reluctance to undergo any form of indoctrination and depersonalization. But at the same time the reforms he introduces after the epidemic are not easily accepted. After he has dismissed all his late father's wives he agrees that he has perhaps moved too quickly:

> Mujungu began to worry whether all his innovations had been for the best.... He still believed in the value of his reforms, but perhaps it was best to slow them up. The first thing he planned to do was to get a few more wives.... Then he might have some peace to carry out his plans. (Africa, 278).

The concluding lines of Africa Answers Back leave us with an open question. We do not know whether Mujungu is acting in accordance with his own tribe's needs. We have seen him in the role of the modern chief, introducing sensible reforms but at the same time, he shows a willingness to be respectful of the traditional ways. But the changes are not easily accepted. They are sometimes criticized by the elders and the wives of his late father. Moreover the question form ending of the novel leaves doubt as concerns his own image.

The literary representation of the outsider in L'Aventure Ambiguë is centered around the character of the madman and Samba Diallo. Samba Diallo who was the true insider becomes an outsider because of his new knowledge, whereas the madman is no longer an outsider because his narration suddenly becomes coherent and meaningful. It is clear that the madman is not an outsider because of his madness. He has been declared mad because the others did not understand his strange behaviour and narration, and his insanity is underlined by both his physical appearance and the nature of his message:

> On eût dit que l'homme savait un secret maléfique au monde et qu'il s'efforçait, par un effort constant, d'en empêcher le jaillissement extérieur. La versatilité du regard ... faisait douter que le cerveau de cet homme pût seulement contenir une pensée lucide. (L'Aventure, 98)
> [One might have said that the man knew a secret which was baleful to the world, and which he was forcing himself by a constant effort to keep from springing to his lips. The inconsistency of his ever-roving glance... raised a doubt... as to whether this man's brain could contain a single lucid thought.(Woods, 86)]

Gradually however, we come to discover that the narration of the madman's stay "au pays des blancs" becomes coherent, and the first person to acknowledge it and give it recognition is the now ageing spiritual leader Thierno. When the latter listens to his story he is impressed: "Le maître se souleva un peu pour rencontrer le regard du fou. La cohérence subite du récit l'avait frappé"(101) ["The teacher raised himself slightly to look into the fool's eyes. He had been struck by the sudden coherence of this recital."(Woods, 89)] and later it is noted that "le fou tressaillit de joie qu'on l'eût si bien compris"(104) ["The fool trembled with joy over having been so well understood"(Woods, 92)].

We therefore witness a certain evolution in the presentation of the madman parallel to another evolution of the Diallobé people. When the madman started telling his story, obviously nobody either understood or believed him:

> Il parlait peu et cela depuis qu'on avait commencé à le surnommer 'le fou'.... assez vit on commença de mettre ses propos en doute. C'est que, d'abord, son récit était si extravagant qu'il était difficile de lui accorder foi. Mais plus encore que cette extravagance du récit, c'était la mimique de l'homme qui inquiétait.... Un jour il sut qu'on l'avait surnommé 'le fou'. Alors, il se tut. (L'Aventure, 98-99).
> ["He spoke little - and that was since people had begun to call him 'the fool'... fairly soon, people began to doubt his recitals. In the first place, this was because his story was so extravagant that it was difficult to put any faith in it. But even more than the extravagance of the narrative itself,

it was the man's histrionic art that worried them... One day he found out that he had been nicknamed 'the fool' Upon that he relapsed into silence."(Woods, 86-7)]

Marginalized during a first phase the madman later discovers a sudden communion with Maître Thierno thus associating his extravagant narrative with the wisdom and knowledge of the teacher who is the only person who can see deep. At a later stage, before the death of the teacher, and on the precipitous return of Samba Diallo the madman acquires another dimension. He is no longer the prophet but acts as the guardian of the tradition, the saviour, and he is thus restored to his sanity when Samba asks him: "Je viens du pays des Blancs. Il parait que tu y as été. Comment était-ce alors?"(182) ["I have come from the country of the white men,[...] "It seems that you have been there. How was it then?"(Woods, 168)]. In the concluding part of the novel (part 2, chapter nine), the madman suddenly becomes the only clear-sighted person of the Diallobé. He feels compelled to kill Samba Diallo because, to him, the latter represents a threat to the traditions of the Diallobé. We can therefore see that in the evolution of the madman, our outsider gradually moves to the privileged position of the unique seer, insider, the 'authentic son of the countryside' who is the guardian of the traditions, the prophet and the redeemer.

In enlarging the comparison to the three examples of L'Aventure Ambiguë, Africa Answers Back, and Un Nègre à Paris, the aim is to demonstrate that the diverging representations of the been-to as an outsider are the result of fundamental differences in their respective standpoints. In Africa Answers back, Mujungu is not a been-to in the conventional sense of the term. His voyage takes place within his native Uganda, but the fact that he moves from a traditional familiar environment into the new western educational atmosphere of the mission boarding school is treated by Nyabongo as an actual voyage 'overseas', the outcome of which is as decisive for the group as is that of Samba Diallo for his Diallobé people for example.

The 'lieu d'énonciation' from which each of the focal figures speaks is different because each of them is typical of a particular stage of the shaping of the hero: the existence and actual formulation of a contract, apart from constituting the motive of the voyage, also influences the hero's relationship with the group. Another factor that determines the been-to's degree of self-assertion (?individuation) is the presence or absence of tutors, in that it indicates his degree of freedom of action and thought.

For Samba Diallo, the general lines of his contract are clear. He is chosen as an instrument - mostly by his aunt and by his cousin the Chief - and sent on a mission which readily proves to be bound to failure. He is told that it is of vital importance that he discovers where the secret of the white man resides. In other words, in both his mind and that of the Diallobé, the superiority of the white man is taken for granted. It is not the case with Mujungu and his father for whom, although they are pressed by the Reverend and other missionaries, the voyage has an essentially prospective value. The outcome of Mujungu's voyage into the world of the white man is less essential: there is nothing urgent. Mujungu understands that he can take his time to find out whether the Reverend was telling the truth as regards the superiority of his religion, and of the West in general. Mujungu therefore is going to make a selective reporting in which the suggested hierarchy of values is not only not taken for granted but is also constantly questioned. This questioning and critical attitude is most evident in the case of Tanhoé Bertin who goes to Paris totally on his own. His departure is not decided by anybody else but himself, thus leaving him free of any relationship of subservience. For him there is no contract and the more general aim of his voyage is to compare:

> ... je vais cesser de contempler le Paris des cartes postales et le Paris des écrans, le Paris qu'on me choisit selon l'humeur du jour. [...] Je ne serai tributaire de personne. On ne verra pas pour moi. On ne pensera pas pour moi. J'irai à l'aventure et je regarderai... je regarderai pour moi. pour toi, pour tous les nôtres. (Un Nègre, 9-10)
> ["I will stop contemplating the Paris of postcards and the cinema-screens, the Paris that is chosen for me according to the mood of the day... I will depend on no one. No one will see for me. No one will think for me. I will go aimlessly about and look ... I will look for me, for you, and for all our folks."].

In Dadié's novel, the narrator is shown performing an active form of reporting. To him, there is nothing in Paris that is to be taken for granted, and nothing is to be believed beforehand unless it is checked against reality. The reason for Tanhoé Bertin being detached seems to be linked, not only with the absence of a contract, but also with his particular frame of mind. He is not preoccupied with finding any solution as there is no urgent or desperate situation that requires it as in the case of Samba Diallo. Moreover, he admits that he is only an ordinary man who represents nobody but himself. Standing in contrast with Samba Diallo and Mujungu - who are both of patrician origin and are therefore seen as the future leaders of their respective people - Tanhoé Bertin makes it clear that he is an undistinguished average book-keeper :

> Je vais voir Paris! Est-ce vrai? Et à quel titre? Je ne suis ni notable, ni chef, ni président d'association, ni un être docile dans les lignes à suivre pas à pas. [...] Partant, je ne représente rien, parce que sans masse derrière, ni devant moi, en une époque où l'on vaut par la masse que l'on peut manier, soulever, brandir, et dont on assome les autres, les pauvres en masse, les gringalets, les poitrinaires que le Christ même avait oublié d'appeler à lui, sur la montagne. Je suis de ceux-là; de ces sans souffle que Dieu avait omis d'appeler [...]. (Un Nègre, 9)
> ["I am going to see Paris and I cannot believe it. How come? I am neither a notable, nor a chief, nor a chairman, nor a docile person ready to follow in others' footsteps... Therefore I represent nothing, I have no masses behind me, nor in front of me, in this era where you are judged according to the size of the masses you can manipulate, raise and brandish, and use to beat down the others with, the poor ones, the puny, and the consumptive that Christ himself forgot to call to him on the mountain. I belong to these, those without breath that even God failed to call..."]

Unlike Tanhoé Bertin who views the West through the eyes of the average African, Samba Diallo and Mujungu speak each from a particular standpoint. But if the three novels exemplify the scrutiny of the West and its values, there is a fundamental difference between the three been-to's. While the satirical tone of Un Nègre à Paris demonstrates the basic optimism of its focal figure as well as his being convinced that he, as an African, is not inferior but is as good or as bad as any European, he does not seek to reconcile two opposed sets of values. He indeed achieves a highly critical comparison of both societies but, retaining an unshakeable confidence in his own culture, he preaches a universal form of humanism. In this respect and in connection with Dadié's other travel chronicle La Ville Où Nul Ne Meurt, Marion A. Thomas considers that Dadié's message is an "attempt to improve the images that Europeans and Africans have of each other and to lessen prejudices by introducing a more cosmopolitan outlook." (Thomas, 1984, 3-4).

The preoccupations of Samba Diallo and Mujungu are more immediate and perhaps more intricately entangled with the expectations of their groups, especially in the case of Samba Diallo. As emphasized by one of his major tutors - the Most Royal Lady - the outcome of his voyage is to determine the survival of the Diallobé. With this heavy burden on his shoulders, Samba Diallo is not able to see as clearly as he should be able to. His mind is still under the contradictory influences of the conflicting opinions of his various tutors. If the Most Royal Lady is positively convinced that, as a member of the élite, Samba Diallo should set the example and be the first to

learn the foreign ways - even at his own risk - Maître Thierno and the Knight are less conditional about the opportune character of the voyage. Thierno is not quite sure and wonders whether "ce qu'ils apprendront vaut-il ce qu'ils oublieront" (L'Aventure, 44) [Would what they would learn be worth as much as what they would forget?(Woods, 34)], and the Knight has underlined that Samba's going to the white school, and later to Paris, was not a free choice.

Unlike Mujungu who is left free to act as he thinks fit, Samba Diallo is the prisoner of contradictory guidance. The former is given no guidance at all. In his mind the traditional upbringing is never questioned. If he is sent to the mission school, it is in order to discover whether the Reverend was telling the truth or not. But the local religions are still valid, despite the attempts of the various missionaries to convert the locals. In Africa Answers Back, despite the grandiloquence of its formulation, the religious debate is quickly resolved for, until Mujungu is able to judge for his father, the latter is convinced that his religion is good enough for him. Likewise, the King tells the various chiefs come for advice that they are free to observe the religion of their choice. Not like Samba Diallo who is the object of a guided mission, Mujungu enjoys more freedom of action as is reflected in his father's advice. As a consequence he is able to view the Reverend's precepts with a more critical eye. His determination shows in his efforts to resist the unwanted aspects of the Reverend's teaching such as his insistence on discarding African ways for more modern ones. Turning a deaf ear on such advices, Mujungu retains a certain confidence in the relevance of his African background.

He is more selective than Samba Diallo in his decision to amalgamate useful European ways with what he thinks is good in the traditional African ones. A similar discernment is to be observed in Dadié's La Ville Où Nul Ne Meurt: "As [he] observes people, places and vestiges of ancient Roman culture around Rome," writes M.A. Thomas, "he becomes more and more aware of his African perspective and value system, and yet also of certain positive aspects he can use from the learning acquired from European teachers."(Thomas,1984, 3). Therefore, like Tanhoé Bertin who puts himself on a footing equal with the European, Mujungu constantly questions the presumed superiority of the white man. In a similar way he is the first one among the African students to break away from the tutorial guidance of the Reverend, and to question the relevance of his "method". In being resolutely pragmatic in his learning, Mujungu's approach resembles that of Tanhoé Bertin. For the latter too, nothing is taken for granted unless it is verified in practice. He relies much on human contact as a means to identify the differences and similarities between the African and the Frenchman. One

should remark here this discernment is perhaps easier to exercise in the case of Dadié as he is a catholic examining a country of similar faith.The major advantage of Tanhoé Bertin is the absence of urgency. He goes to Paris, not on a mission, but rather like a Picaro. He is in a more independent frame of mind and he is less concerned with urgent reforms. He enjoys the detachment of a spectator, of an outsider who has chosen his standpoint. As opposed to Samba Diallo, who is an outsider against his will, and to Mujungu who becomes an outsider because of the reforms he initiates perhaps too hastily, Tanhoé Bertin is only a traveller in the West, a traveller who is perhaps more optimistic than either Samba Diallo or Mujungu.

In actual fact Samba Diallo cannot afford to be optimistic. To begin with, the cultural tools he has acquired during his stay at the foreign school and overseas are not complete. Then, even if they were, they would not be applicable to the Diallobé world which has to be judged according to other yardsticks. When he says that he is unable to find the way to this world (that of the Diallobé) again, he is as pathetic as Obi Okonkwo in No Longer At Ease who is unable to see the real Lagos he is returning to. Both 'been-to's' are helpless victims of a serious personality disintegration. As a consequence of this hybrid or incomplete upbringing, both heroes are shown to be unable to make any decision of their own.

Some critics have seen in this indecision the direct result of Samba Diallo's interrupted, incomplete and contradictory upbringing. As we have seen earlier, he is put into the new school before he is allowed to complete his Koranic studies at the Glowing Hearth. Similarly, while studying in Paris, he is later called back even before he reaches the final stage of his studies there. As a consequence he is only able to say, "je ne trouve plus le chemin de ce monde". Feeling equally alien in both the Western and the Diallobé worlds, he is conscious that he is a cultural hybrid, neither a Westernized been-to nor a true son of the Diallobé in tune with the traditions of his people. For Samba Diallo the terms of the choice are mutually exclusive and conflicting. On the one hand his subjectivity draws him towards the spiritualism of the traditional Diallobé society which is falling apart. On the other, his objective ego is attracted to the materialism of the western world for he sees in it the key for survival. This conflict between spiritualism and materialism remains unresolved. It is the awareness of this deep incoherence which leads him to a dead end and eventually to his death.

A similar incoherence is also to be found in the character of Obi Okonkwo although the context is somewhat different. As far as Obi is concerned the choice is already made. Starting from the early years of his grandfather in Umuofia who saw Isaac (Nwoye) join the missionaries, it is clear that Obi's parents have taken sides. Nwoye has become a Christian catechist who raises his children according to the new standards. They are educated at the mission school, and taught the Bible instead of the traditional Ibo folk tales of their ancestors. His studies being sponsored by funds collected by the Umuofians, it appears that the choice is already made for him. He has to study law and is expected on his return to help his kinsmen in the handling of their landcases against their neighbours. Moreover it is the will of his sponsors that he should ultimately constitute a fruitful investment by sharing with Umuofia the privilege of being their first member in the Senior Civil Service, and by shedding the benefits of his position on the community at large. Therefore, all that is expected from him is reduced to a mere compliance with the pre-determined itinerary, a scheme that does not leave room for the evolution of Obi's personality.

As opposed to his grandfather Ogbuefi Okonkwo, Obi's character has changed considerably since he first went away to England. In Things Fall Apart, we are told that Ogbuefi Okonkwo's exile has not weakened his ambition. On the contrary, this period has reinforced his determination to make up for the seven years wasted in exile and to regain in Umuofia the place that is due to him. R.N. Okafor writes in this respect that throughout the narrative

> Okonkwo's basic character does not evolve and he maintains the same traits of character even after his seven years exile in Mbanta. If anything, his exile made him even more loyal to the traditional values of his clan having entertained for such a long period romantic visions of his society. (Okafor, 1972, 225).

The same thing cannot be said of Obi Okonkwo who on his return from England views the world through totally different eyes. On his return, his first impression is that the Nigeria he had in his mind is different from what he sees now. This change is reflected in the way he represents Lagos at different periods of his evolution. Before his departure, as he spends a few days with his friend Joseph, he retains of Lagos the image of a town where there was no darkness because of the public lights that are on all night. While following his friend Joseph who shows him around he gets the impression of a town where people have a lot of activities and fun. As he comes back some years later, on his return from England, his eyes do not see the pleasant side of Lagos any more but rather its hidden and ugly parts, "the real Lagos he hadn't imagined existed until now"(17). And after

comparing his romantic view of Nigeria, as expressed in the poem he wrote during his first months in England, with the actual view of Lagos, "he recalled this poem and then turned and looked at the rotting dog in the storm drain and smiled. 'I have tasted putrid flesh in the spoon,' he said through clenched teeth"(17), a view that is not fundamentally different from that of Samba Diallo when he says, "je ne reconnais plus le chemin de ce monde".

It is implied that while he was away, he had developed a romantic representation of his country as can be seen in the poem he wrote during his first winter in England:

> How sweet it is to lie beneath a tree
> At eventime and share the ecstasy
> Of jocund birds and flimsy butterflies;
> How sweet to leave our earthbound body in its mud,
> And rise towards the music of the spheres,
> Descending softly in the wind,
> And the tender glow of the fading sun (No Longer, 17)

In a discussion of the literary conventions used by the returned Obi, David Carroll indicates that "Lagos, of course, has remained the same. What has changed so drastically is Obi and the stereotypes he seeks to impose on the city (Carroll, 1980, 66). According to the critic, there are in the mind of Obi two conflicting 'alien' literary conventions:

> Thanks to his degree in English literature, he is equipped to articulate the conflict: at one extreme, in his absence, Nigeria is translated into the terms of an English pastoral; at the other extreme, on his return, it becomes the decaying wasteland of the twentieth century. The violence of this change from one alien literary convention to another... manages to suggest the inability of the hybrid hero searching in vain for a stable point of view. (Carroll, 1980, 67).

In his search for a stable point of view some critics suggest that, by using foreign stereotypes about Africa, Obi is throwing the traditions of his fathers overboard. It would perhaps be more accurate to underline that Obi has nothing to jettison; he is perfectly alien to the traditions of his forefathers for, as it is once reported by his friend Joseph, "Obi's mission-house upbringing and European education had made him a stranger in his country"(No Longer, 71-72). As can also be seen during his school-days, he has been carefully kept away from the traditions. As David Carroll notes "he both mistranslated his Bible lessons and was unable to narrate folk-stories at school"(Carroll, 1980, 43).

It appears therefore that, although he does not master his European culture completely, these alien cultural references constitute his unique set of values, however uncertain they might be. They represent his only

point of anchorage although they do not appear to help him resolve the conflicts he faces when he returns to Nigeria. Whereas his grandfather Ogbuefi Okonkwo would appeal to the deities and the spirits of the clan whenever he was in doubt, "Obi would seek refuge in the poems of A.E. Housman and T.S. Eliot, bards of an alien culture"(Okafor, 1972, 225).

It is easy to trace in the narrative the alien cultural references used by Obi whenever he faces a situation which he is unable to master, or simply when he wants to convey an idea. Ogbuefi Okonkwo would have used the Ibo proverbs, "the palm oil with which Achebe's words are eaten"[4]; but Obi refers to something else, with which he thinks he is more familiar. At his interview for instance, he is able to impress the European member of the board because he shows his scholarly knowledge of European literature. Their discussion concentrates on Graham Greene's The Heart Of The Matter and in order to prove his point Obi quotes W.H. Auden and refers to A Handful Of Dust. In a similar way he uses the image of the 'Augean stable' to express his revulsion against his country and the prevailing corruption:

> What an Augean stable! he muttered to himself. Where does one begin? With the masses? He shook his head. Not a chance there. It would take centuries. A handful of men at the top. Or even one man with a vision - an enlightened dictator. People are scared of the word nowadays. But what kind of democracy can exist side by side with so much corruption and ignorance? Perhaps a half-way house - a sort of compromise. (43-44)

For David Carroll, Obi in so speaking proves to be

> a black Englishman whose knowledge of Africa only enables him to discern more clearly the precise nature of its corruption... Alienated from his own society, he assumes that reform will have to be imposed from outside. Obi sounds like a colonial describing the natives and, as the next sentence indicates, he has even cultivated the expatriate's self-deprecatory gloss: 'When Obi's reasoning reached this point he reminded himself that England had been as corrupt not so very long ago'. The assumption is, of course, that Africa is evolving in the direction of Europe. (Carroll, 1980, 68-69).

By showing how far Obi has been Europeanized by his stay overseas, Achebe completes the circle which was begun in Things Fall Apart when Nwoye left his father's house to join the mission-school. The picture is therefore complete and we are thus given the two extremes of the spiritual itinerary of the hero. The palm-wine and kola-nut used by his ancestors on social occasions is replaced by the Coca Cola Obi offers his guests. Instead of invoking the ancestors, he refers to the "bards of an alien culture". But beyond the expression of an estrangement however, we are made aware of the cultural dislocation which affects Obi. While during his childhood "village life... seemed to be a stable synthesis of Ibo and Christian

elements"(Carroll, 1980, 70), the balance does not exist any longer on Obi's return. It is only a temporary harmony as suggested in Mary's prayer at the departure ceremony:

> Oh God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob... the Beginning and the End. Without you we can do nothing. The great river is not big enough for you to wash your hands in. You have the yam and you have the knife; we cannot eat unless you cut us a piece. We are like ants in your sight. We are like little children who only wash their stomach when they bath , leaving their back dry.(No Longer, 9)

This seemingly harmonious blending of Ibo and Christian elements is disrupted four years later at Obi's welcome ceremony by the symbolic quarrel over the kola nut ritual which, according to his father, is not compatible with his Christian faith.

Obi's marginality appears at several levels and culminates in his deciding to marry an *osu*. To begin with, his difference is stressed several times as he is contrasted with his negative doubles like Stephen Udom, Christopher and Joseph, thus making of him a person apart. This separatedness is also present when, before the arrival of their cargo-boat in Lagos, he criticizes the behaviour of Stephen Udom, another "been-to" who showed his disappointment because there was no crowd at the dock to welcome the returning ones. Obi does not understand why "As soon as Lagos had been sighted (Stephen Udom) had returned to his cabin to emerge half an hour later in black suit, bowler hat and rolled umbrella, even though it was a hot October day."(30).

There are however other mistakes relating to more fundamental issues such as bribery or traditions. As mentioned during their lunch when Obi and Christopher talked about bribery in Nigeria's public life, their disagreement comes from the fact that Obi is not realistic. Whereas Christopher somehow accepts the practice of bribery, Obi hides actual facts and believes that it would disappear if the top post men were replaced by graduates straight from the university who, in his terms, "can afford to be virtuous"(21). But although he is against "the use of improper influence"(21), he finally comes to the conclusion that "if the applicant is getting the job anyway, there is no harm in accepting the money from him"(121).

However he does not display the same scruples as regards his relationship with Clara. He deliberately ignores the customs of his people. By deciding to marry her, despite his being aware of going against a general current, he shows a strong self-will and individualism.

If we look at Obi from another angle however, it seems possible to sustain the view that his marginality is an inherited one. For if he has been so alienated by his stay and education overseas that he does not see any harm in marrying an *osu*, he is shown to follow his ancestors' example. The chain of unnatural deeds that upset the Ibo traditional order began with Obi's grandfather Ogbuefi Okonkwo. In this respect, as he recalls his childhood days, Isaac Okonkwo tells his son about "Ikemefuna with whom I grew up until the day came when my father killed him with his own hands"(138). The marginalizing chain starts at this point of the lineage for it was said that "it was a great wrong that a man should raise his hands against a child that called him father"(139). Obi's father (called Nwoye at that time), in turn, left his father's house and went with the missionaries accompanied by his parental curse: "He placed a curse upon me... When a man curses his own child it is a terrible thing"(138). Equally terrible is the behaviour of Obi who, despite his being aware that he is the object of heavy expectations, is nevertheless disrespectful of traditions and parents, and therefore faces the curse of his ageing parents - A situation of a similar nature is described in one of Achebe's short stories, "Marriage is a private affair," where Nnaemeka's marriage with Nene, of a non-Ibo-speaking tribe, is rejected by his father. (Girls at War and other stories, 1972). And as he is reminded by his father

> Our fathers in their darkness called an innocent man an *osu*, a thing given to idols, and thereafter he became an outcast, and his children, and his children's children for ever... *Osu* is like leprosy in the minds of our people. I beg of you, my son, not to bring the mark of shame and leprosy into your family. If you do, your children and your children's children unto the third and fourth generations will curse your memory... You will bring sorrow on your head and on the heads of your children.(No Longer, 133).

As Obi is also told by his mother, his choosing to marry Clara is something unnatural, as unnatural as Okonkwo killing Ikemefuna: "if you do the thing while I am alive you will have my blood on your head because I shall kill myself"(136). This example indicates that, whereas L'Aventure Ambiguë, for example, is built around the inability of Samba Diallo to choose between two systems of values neither of which he knows correctly, No Longer At Ease, in the words of Abiola Irele "is built up out of the profound gulf that exists between Obi's Western education and its practical relevance to his individual place in the world"(Irele, 1979, 15). In other words there is a "practical dissolution between the intellectual and the moral poles " of Obi's awareness, thus giving birth to what has been termed by some critics as incoherent behaviour.

This acquired marginality is not only the characteristic of his lineage but it is also the result of his specific upbringing. On his first visit to his parents he naively wonders "what would happen if I stood up and said to him: 'Father, I no longer believe in your God'?"(56). This rejection is to be found in his parents' attitude towards Ibo traditions. He remembers his childhood when his mother displayed a certain zeal to show that they were the "people of the church" as opposed to the mass, the "people of nothing." For example, "she taught her children not to accept food in neighbours' houses because she said they offered their food to idols. That fact alone set her children apart from all others for, among the Ibo, children were free to eat where they liked." (58, emphasis mine).

His education has set him apart as it is further shown when he is asked by the schoolteacher to tell the class a folk-story. Obi bursts into tears as he is unable to recite any for the simple reason that his mother has taught him none.

Apart from tracing the origin of Obi's marginality, the previous argument has shown how Obi has succeeded in making himself marginal by undertaking actions that go against the generally accepted behaviour. However this acquired marginality is complemented by another of his characteristics: on various occasions, he is shown to be incapable of making any decision of his own. He not only seems to rely on Joseph, Clara, or Christopher for delicate matters, but some issues are proved to be imposed upon him as it is the case with his accepting his first bribe.

By being presented as the unsuccessful returned been-to, Obi Okonkwo is, in various aspects, similar to Baako Onipa, the focal figure in Ayi Kwei Armah's Fragments. To begin with both Achebe and Armah present us with character-types, almost archetypes: the returning been-to who is expected to be successful, and also the alienated or the materialistic ones such as Stephen Udom, Sam Okoli in No Longer At Ease and H.R.H. Brempong in Fragments.

Obi's awareness of his difference is triggered on the boat by the behaviour of Stephen Udom. This young returning Nigerian student is conforming to the expectations of his countrymen for, despite the hot weather on the day of their arrival, he dresses in a suit so as to impress those who might be waiting for him at the dock. This expected conformity is further underlined by the comment of one of the Umuofia Progressive Union members who expected a young man freshly arrived from abroad "to be impressively turned out"(31). As we have seen in Fragments it is also in

order to satisfy the relatives waiting for him at Accra airport that Brempong, "the black man in a wool suit"(Fragments, 61), gives so much importance to his external appearance. By giving so much importance to the amount of material things he brings back with him, he resembles in a sense Achebe's Hon. Sam Okoli. The latter is shown as giving excessive importance to everything that comes from abroad. He serves his guests sherry and whisky, not local palm-wine, and while he shows Obi his radiogram of which he is particularly proud, displays a certain veneration of objects (a veneration which will be taken further in Armah's Fragments by the formulation of the cargo cult):

> 'If you press this button down, it begins to record. If you want to stop, press this one. This is for playing records and this one is the radio...' He stopped the tape-recorder, wound back and then pressed the play-back knob. 'You will hear all our conversation, everything'. He smiled with satisfaction as he listened to his own voice, adding an occasional commentary in pidgin.
> 'White man don go far. We just de shout for nothing'.(No Longer, 68)

The heroes' criticism of the weaknesses of their own societies is also to be found in their insistent description of a pervasive spiritual desert. The Nigeria Obi comes back to is shown to be very different from the idealized image he had before his departure and during his stay overseas. In his own terms "Lagos was always associated with electric lights and motor-cars"(No Longer,14). However on his return he notices that

> the Nigeria he returned to was in many ways different from the picture he had carried in his mind during those four years. There were many things he could no longer recognize, and others - like the slums of Lagos - which he was seeing for the first time.(No Longer, 13).

As he stands in the car-park waiting for Clara he is struck by the prevailing putrefaction which, as will be shown later in the recurrence of excremental imagery, corresponds to the image of the spiritual desert in which the hero evolves. In this respect it is striking that in both novels (No Longer and Fragments) similar images are used to convey similar ideas. In the above mentioned car-park Obi is struck by the number of dead dogs. As he says:

> His car was parked close to a wide-open storm-drain from which came a very strong smell of rotting flesh. It was the remains of a dog which had no doubt been run over by a taxi. Obi used to wonder why so many dogs were killed by cars in Lagos, until one day the driver he had engaged to teach him driving went out of his way to run over one. In shocked amazement Obi asked why he had done it. 'Na good luck', said the man. 'Dog bring good luck for new car. But duck be different. If you kill duck you go get accident or kill man'.(No Longer, 16).

In Fragments, it is not the hero but his girl-friend Juana who witnesses a similar episode. Driving through Jamestown, she describes how a mad crowd sacrifices a dog with no apparent reason. The scene is reported with extensive details and it is only towards the sixth page of the description that we are given the real motive: it is killed by the man with the swollen scrotum:

> This triumphant killer walked off with his prize in a strange way... The drip of life came down from the upturned end of the pickax. But from the man himself something else commenced to drip: down along his right leg flowed a stream of something yellow like long-thickened urine mixed with streaks of clotted blood... Something that had stayed locked up and poisoned the masculinity of his days was now coming down....(Fragments, 29).

It is not coincidental that in both examples the dogs are treated as sacrificial victims. According to Obi's driver it is supposed to bring good luck to the owner of a new car, while in the second example it is meant to cure the man and make him regain his lost masculinity. In both cases however it is something that makes the heroes feel sick therefore showing their inability to adapt themselves to their milieu.

This inability to fit into that type of society transforms Obi's return into a failure. However the hero is unable to identify the causes of his failure. According to Abiola Irele, this has been provoked by "a pracical dissociation between the intellectual and the moral poles of his awareness"(Irele, 1979, 16). In other words Obi is really not up to the level of a conscious adult and this makes his behaviour pathetic. Various examples from the novel can be used to show how limited his degree of awareness is. The only exception is on his arrival at home when he reassures his father that he is going to take his brother's school fees in charge, considers the necessity of giving his parents a monthly allowance from his salary and finally agrees that one cannot eat one's cake and have it. After all, "there are many young men in this country today who would sacrifice themselves to get the opportunity I have had"(61). But apart from this moment of clear-sightedness the rest of his decisions are characterized by "his weakness of character (which) is reflected in his inept handling of his human relationships and of his material problems; he is an individual with no sense of order, whose incapacity is contrasted to the strength of character of his hardly literate 'fellow Umuofians' "(Irele, 1979, 16):

> It would seem that Achebe intends Obi's story to be tragic in this sort of Audenesque way, a view confirmed by the very banal level at which Obi's defeat takes place. He succumbs because loans have to be repaid, money sent home, expenses

> accounted for. For this effect to be produced, Obi has to be made so naive and self-deluded that he comes close to appearing merely childish... As the catalogue of debts and expenditure mounts, one becomes too aware of the cards being stacked against him. It is a very simple-minded young man indeed who does not expect to receive a demand for income tax or an electricity bill.(Ravenscroft, 1969, 21).

Arthur Ravenscroft's argument is concerned with the verisimilitude of the character of Obi - the same reproach can well apply to A Man Of The People in the character of Odili Samalu - as depicted by Chinua Achebe. In our opinion, it is not relevant to ask whether characters in any novel, in the ones we are concerned with in this study in particular, are real-like, fictional or psychologically thin. Since most of the novelists we deal with here are more concerned with character types rather than with real characters, one should not attack them on grounds of verisimilitude.

As has been hinted at by the various comparisons between Obi Okonkwo and Baako Onipa, there is, between the two focal figures, an ambivalent relationship. To begin with, it must be underlined that they belong to different periods. One describes a focal figure that faces a situation that is typical of the sixties in Africa, whereas the other relates to a more modern period. However, one should note the following points. If Obi Okonkwo has been marginalised, it is, in the final instance, because of his awkward attempt to comply with the prevailing system. Ironically, it is when he decides to accept his first bribes that he is caught red-handed and vilipended. On the contrary, Baako Onipa is pushed aside because he heroically refuses to play the game. In so resisting, Baako proves how strong his personality is. In his view, it is not because he is unable to do as the others do, but because he believes that one should keep the ancestral traditions which are far better than what he calls the newly erected gods. As for Obi Okonkwo, it is not because he has a strong personality that he rejects the traditional beliefs that still constitute the laws of the world of Umuofia. It is rather because his personality has seriously disintegrated.

Ultimately, if Obi Okonkwo becomes marginalised, it is certainly because his hybrid education has not equipped him to cope with the exigencies of his traditional background, but it is also because he refuses to understand the importance of the prevailing customs. In other words, the fault is his. With Baako Onipa, the fault seems to be on the other side. It is society that refuses to understand him. Because he consciously refuses to conform to the generally accepted expectations, he is segregated beyond the limits of the social circle. Inside the circle belong the conforming ones; outwith the circle, the liminal ones.

Like Obi, and like the liminal figures of Fragments, Ben - the focal character of Going Down River Road - is depicted as a total outsider. He is not like the other hands, but he is a marginal and totally individualistic character. As David Cook writes, Ben is typical of the modern isolated figures of African fiction :

> The key figures in African novels and plays are typically at variance with their societies, however closely wedded to them they may be in certain respects... In the challenge that these protagonists offer to group behaviour, they are unrepresentative. While the issues they raise may be those unavoidably facing their societies, they themselves become atypical. It is normal to be a unit in the close-knit social pattern; so that to break the set design is abnormal. (Cook, 1977, 4-5).

In the case of Going Down River Road the set design of determined relationship between the hero and his society is broken. To begin with, the hero encountered in the novel is rather unconventional. Ben is indeed the protagonist but we have no information about his background. He appears to have no family ties, and therefore no duties. The point of comparison is Ocholla for example. The latter is an ordinary worker with no qualification and no education. He is not even equipped to read a newspaper. However he is the reference point against which Ben will be judged. Whereas Ocholla has come from the province looking for work in the city, driven by a desire to feed the family which remains back home, Ben ends up on the construction site simply because he has been rejected from elsewhere. He has no family to provide for; his wages go to pay for his own expenses since Wini provides food and accommodation. Unlike the other hands who, on payday, are caught between their vigilant wives and their debtors, Ben does not seem to be concerned. This detachment and apartness can be felt in the way he describes the scene:

> It is a good day today. The site is nice and hot, the labourers happy. They have got reasons to smile. One reason is that they have had lunch. [...] But the main reason every hand is excited today is that today is payday. Payday still remains the greatest day of the month. The pay packet retains number one position in the popularity chart of any construction site. Pay time is usually lunch time; Yussuf is not going to waste busy work hours just to get a lot of bastards paid. They take it at lunch time or leave it. [...] Ragged and dusty, they shove and jostle while the queue crawls almost imperceptibly towards the office pigeon hole. They receive their envelopes, rip them open and count two, three times before they are quite satisfied. Then they stuff the hard-earned, long-overdue cash in their ragged clothes; a labourer's outfit may be as emaciated as his body but the pockets are as leak-proof as his

In the case of Going Down River Road the design of family duties is broken and the focal figure is quite an unconventional one. Ben is indeed the central character but we have no information about his background. He used to be an army officer as we are given to know, and he is too easily lured into an illegal deal with gangsters, and this leads to his downfall. As such Ben is shown to be a mere victim, someone who is extremely passive. In the opinion of Rubadiri,

> No attempt is made to attract sympathy for the characters except in the implication that they have been brutalized by their way of life. Ben, the central figure, is boorish and more a victim of his own folly than of 'society'. A former lieutenant, he has been cashiered after selling a mortar to a criminal gang. The incident is one of many in which we feel the absence of guidance from a narrator. [...]
> The novel cannot be read as a moral work, or a story with characters. Incidents are connected but their banality and the participants' lack of character are what the author means to show. (McEwan, 1983, 123)

- the outsiders who resist.

While in South Africa, Timi Tabane believed it was possible to reach some form of commitment by taking stands on educational issues such as the Bantu Education Act. He was feeling concerned by the nature of the teaching the children were provided with. With his journalistic work too, he thought it would be possible to do some rewarding work. However he soon loses his illusions and comes to realise what it takes for a black intellectual to try and make a living in South Africa. In books one and two of The Wanderers, he exposes his disillusionment with teaching, actually reflecting his disillusionment with and his indictment of South African apartheid politics. This is visible in the way in which he confesses his opposition to the politics of segregation in education which puts an end to his teaching career. Quitting teaching does not bring happiness however. Timi reluctantly reverts to journalism and starts working with *Bongo*. His attempt to reach some form of commitment by taking up the case of Rampa is an episode which occupies a large section of The Wanderers and shows Mphahlele's commitment to a specific cause.

By producing this testimony to the relationship between racism and labour economy in South Africa, Mphahlele does exceptional work. While, with other South African novelists, there is no deep exploration of the grotesqueness of racism in relationship to the economy of labour, "Mphahlele exposes this hidden and unexplored facet of the culture of alienation and capitalism and his setting and theme are quite uncommon"(Ogunjimi, 1985, 121). In so doing Mphahlele uses the motif of the journey as a specific technique to highlight

the various disfunctional patterns in the Republic and provides the reader with a vivid encounter of the various strands of apartheid culture and structure. The novel starts with Rampa's move to the city to seek employment. He is soon missing and Timi and Naledi are involved in looking for him. To Ogunjimi, "the symbolism in his ordeal is not far-fetched. Rampa is a socio-cultural and political phenomenon in the system; he is not an individual but the *Everyman of his race*.(Ogunjimi, 1985, 122).

The versatility of this symbolism seems to extend to the case of Timi Tabane himself. This journey represents a quest within a quest, a journey within another journey. The failure of the first one - Rampa is already dead - foreshadows the uselessness of the second one. If through the case of Rampa, we are able to understand the questions involved in the Bantu Education Act of 1955, the question of forced labour, or the pass law, we are also given an insight into how a man is gradually forced to leave his country. Though the case of Rampa made quite a stir in the South African World when it was published, thus assuring Timi's prospects as a successful journalist, Timi acknowledges the increasing need for flight: "Something tells me I'm going to make a sudden decision to quit and go and make another start somewhere, far away from South Africa. It won't be long."(The Wanderers, 166). We are then told how Timi escapes over the border "into what was then Bechuanaland, and from there by stages up to a newly independent country in West Africa (i.e. Nigeria). He takes a job as a schoolmaster, and Karabo with their two children are later able to join him by accepting a 'one-way exit permit', which means that neither of them will be able to visit South Africa again..."(Jarrett-Kerr, 1973, 113). For Timi Tabane, this one-way trip is justified by the hope that it may be out of his country, if not out of Africa altogether, that he will feel needed. Therefore he comes to the conclusion that

> We must move... Where to? Certainly out of Africa, stay out until we can feel needed. That's the measure of a man's vanity. He can't be apologetic about it , he can't pretend he wants to eat grass, dress in skins and wear khaki shorts to know he's an exile in search of an asylum... I love Africa but, like Aunt Dora, I like the person who likes me.... I'll serve the country that needs me - more than that, *wants* me. Happiness without commitment to local affairs outside Africa, or happiness without commitment in Africa and the eventual negation of that happiness... It's a long circuitous road.... I must wait outside Africa, contemplate the painful south and what I can do about it. (The Wanderers, 309-10)

It is probably the feeling of Mabi in A Wreath for Udomo as he arrives in Panafrica and discovers that he no longer belongs there. As opposed to Lanwood who, by being an old westernised creole, is of no use if not a threat to Udomo's government and represents nobody, Mabi is first presented as the figure of the insider. Although he is met on his arrival by Adebhoy, the new Minister of Health and Housing, Mabi reacts in a way that is opposed to Lanwood's and tells Adebhoy, "I was afraid I might have to face the same kind of public circus you arranged for Tom and Mhendi..."(Udomo, 225). His use of the word 'circus' not only implies that he is of an altogether different nature than Lanwood, but that he is able to see behind the public behaviour of Udomo as well.

He is aware that Udomo has become "the new tribal chief superseding all the others; a kind of super tribal chief and father of his people."(226). But behind the leader's charisma, he knows that the motto - *The cause is bigger than personalities* - is only a piece of claptrap, "A good umbrella under which to betray one's friends"(229). Therefore it is clear to him that, though he did not want to call him back, his return has been arranged by Udomo as part of a larger political scheme, for, as the latter reveals, it is only by appointing Mabi to a Ministerial post that he can win the support of the mountain people.

In this respect, Michael Udomo and Kisimi Kamara in The African share the same acute awareness of the decisive role of tribal links in emerging Africa. Although the former does not hide his scheme - play the game of tribalists now and fight them later - the latter views the tribal links with a more sympathetic eye. As early as his final year at secondary school in Sagresa, Kisimi becomes aware of "the utter futility and wastefulness of making issues of tribal divisions in a land where so much else required our attentions and energies."(The African, 32). This profound thought is the outcome of a quarrel between two schoolboys, Kisimi and Samuel - Kisimi belonging to the Northern Lokko tribe and Samuel to the Sagresa tribe. As they are reconciled in their common thrashing by the principal, they realise that the punishment has brought them together. As a consequence they both pledge themselves to devote their energies "to the ideal of helping to create in our time a country which would achieve both strength and freedom through unity, and the subordination to that ideal of all tribal loyalties."(The African, 38). Like Udomo who integrates Mabi in his cabinet, Kisimi asks Samuel to join him in founding a new political party and emphasises that their union would symbolize the the union of two tribes.

In his "Perceptions of African Independences: an Overview," Neil Lazarus discusses the nationalist perspective developed in The African and attributes it to Kisimi's own political ideal of achieving unity regardless of tribal loyalties. As it is articulated and developed in the novel,

> this is an ideal posing the attainment of nationhood as an end in itself. The 'Party for Unity and Liberation', of which Kisimi becomes the leader, takes as its credo 'Unity Now; Self-Government in Five Years'. Its emblem becomes a diamond, symbolising the mutifacetedness of the community, all united in a single cause: nationalism. [But] beyond a characteristically nationalist call for the burying of ethnic animosities, there is only silence: nothing is said about realignment of social classes, redistribution of wealth or land, more equitable utilisation of resources, implementation of more participatory forms of political organisation, etc. These silences are crucial. they are not silences at all, in fact, but speak volumes. They reveal what Ayi Kwei Armah, writing about nationalist ideology in general, has spoken of as the desire simply to substitute a black top for a white one on the colonial bottle. (Lazarus, n.d., 5-6).

As the rest of the narration proves, Mabi is not Udomo's man, and though he is there to stand for the elections, this does not make him a Udomo man. As he is later welcomed by the chiefs and elders of his mountain people, he understands that for them he is the successful been-to. To start with, he is the only one from the mountain tribes to have gone abroad. As the teacher heading the small welcome committee tells him,

> You are a hero here. You're a son of the mountains, the first one to have gone abroad into the outside world. And you've had a great success. Whenever anything about you and your work is printed in the English papers, those papers find their way here and the young people display them. You will see some in the school. The young people will vote for you whatever the elders do or say. That's why the elders are receiving you. They know of the power you have over the young. (Udomo, 232).

Unlike Lanwood, Mabi is the insider who is perfectly aware of the different rituals, though his approach to them is very critical. On his arrival for instance, he knew that, according to the customs, he would be welcomed only by people of his age group or younger ones: "His blood relatives came to him, one at a time, men first and in order of seniority. Each person touched his hand, did a little bow, and made room for the next. And so it went on, first the blood relatives, then all the others."(231).

Though he considers the whole thing "an awful piece of ritual," "a goddam ritualistic farce [during which] these people of mine choke their feeling with elaborate ritual"(231), he willingly submits to the custom. It is for him to go to the elders and announce his arrival :

> If he were fortunate, if the elders thought him worthy of some sign of respect, they would be gathered in one place where he would go to announce his arrival. Otherwise he would have to travel from village to village paying his respects to the elders before finally going to his own mother's home. (Udomo, 230).

The elders turn out to think that he is worthy of their respect and are waiting for him in a hut designed for the meeting. During this scene in which Mabi confronts the elders who are sitting in a semi-circle about the chief, it is interesting to contrast the dialogue that actually takes place between the chief and Mabi, with the internal monologue in the mind of the latter. As he uses the traditional code words to address the audience whose members ask him tricky questions, he is aware that he is back in a tribal world and that he has to forget his western individualism. Therefore "he made all the conventional responses to the old men, to the chief, to the old man who had sired him without ever being his father."(237).

As the nature of this relationship between father and son tends to prove, there is no link of sympathy between the returned one and the traditional world. Though he understands the use and meaning of the various rituals, he nevertheless tolerates them only in so far as his contact with them is necessary and temporary. In his mind, though tribalism is an important component of African political life, it is viewed as an evil necessity. To him, "The real evil of tribalism in this day and age was its ritualistic code of fear and authority had robbed man of his individual manhood. How easily the dictator-state could flourish here." (Udomo, 237)

Not only is, in his mind, the pressure of the group incompatible with the expression of individual worth, but its authority is no longer in accord with the emergence of central leadership in African modern politics. In this new relationship between central authority and tribal powers, the latter have to submit to the former: "whatever you think of Udomo, he is the new authority, and the basis of your lives, the cornerstone of your tradition, is respect for authority." (Udomo, 236).

This central authority, represented by Udomo, is accepted by Mabi as long as it constitutes an impersonal relationship contributing towards a higher ideal - the national cause. Within this scope, the fate of tribal links is not of extreme importance. As Udomo explains to Mabi after the reception organised for them by the elders, the need now in African politics is for "trained men who are free of the tribal hold and yet understand it sufficiently to be diplomatic about it." (242). Behind Udomo's clever formulation his intent is to side with Mabi so as to combat the tribalist

tendency in his cabinet - represented by Adebhoy and Selina. In the eyes of Mabi Udomo has become an expert at disguising his own feelings. This public attitude showing a politician who is favourable to the tribal ways is part of a deliberate gesture of Udomo. He goes through all the necessary rituals without blinking, including when they bathed his feet in blood in one place. Like Kisimi, he can say, "I was doing a complete *volte-face* in my personal habits, in my code of behaviour, even in my ethical and cultural standards." (The African, 109).

In order to win the sympathy and votes of other tribes, Kisimi swaps his European suits for African gowns, avoids speaking English in public while he masters two of the six languages of Songhai and switches from Christianity to Islam. As part of his cultural *volte-face* he asks his parents for a traditionally 'arranged' marriage despite being, as he says, the first been-to to do so: "I accepted that, in my new role of politician, the whole of my success would depend on knowing what gesture had to be made, and at what time."(The African, 110). One of these gestures is to cancel his present subscriptions to European newspapers and periodicals and instead, "to take out subscriptions to a representative selection of daily papers and periodicals published in and about Africa - the essential grist of the politician's mill."(110). This consciously orchestrated 'anti-Western revolt' represents Kisimi's choice to subordinate all personal feelings and considerations to a higher political goal.

Though, for Udomo, personal considerations are not to be taken into account, it is more than Mabi can accept. To begin with Mabi still feels a strong resentment towards Udomo. In his eyes, the latter is the one who has betrayed Lois. Regardless of personal feeling, he is also ready to betray friends such as Thomas Lanwood and David Mhendi. Because Lanwood is embarrassing - he has prematurely and tactlessly voiced his views against tribalism - Udomo is ready to sacrifice him, and does not prevent him from returning to London. In a similar way, the officially professed non-fraternisation rule towards the Pluralian regime is pure hypocrisy. Udomo's option is heavy industrialisation as a way of counterattacking tribalism from the rear. And since he needs "Mhendi's whites so desperately" - they're making him the best offer - he cannot allow Mhendi's personal plans to jeopardise his own. He therefore yields to the pressure of Van Linton, the Pluralian businessman and representative whose government is asking for Mhendi's head, and reveals to him the hidden path through the jungle leading to Mhendi's secret camp. "I told Van Linton where his camp was. I had to do

that or lose their aid. You know what that would have meant" (Udomo, 292), he confesses to a shocked Mabi.

To Mabi Udomo has been betraying too many people, starting with Lois in London. We recall how he felt "the guilt of Africa" as Lois came to him, telling him of the abortion she has just witnessed in her flat. Mabi feels a similar uneasiness while trying to comfort Lanwood, knowing beforehand that Udomo is ready to jettison the old leader sooner or later. Finally, learning how Udomo sold Mhendi to Pluralia, he is unable to listen to Udomo's explanations.

After the subsequent fight during which Mabi is knocked unconscious , Udomo skilfully brings the steward to witness his master's "sickness". When they meet again the following day and Mabi insists on resigning from his post despite Udomo's pressure urging him to stay, the latter unscrupulously blackmails him. As Mabi knows the truth about Mhendi's betrayal, he has become dangerous to Udomo :

> You don't think I'll allow you to mess up my work.[...] You get on the first available plane. I believe there's one tonight. You'll be going on sick leave. You had a breakdown last night. Your steward was here to bear witness. You'll be away so long that I'll be forced to give your Ministry to someone else. (Udomo, 295).

In being declared mad and chased from the country, Mabi reminds us of two of Armah's characters. In Fragments Baako's refusal to glorify the big shots of the country - by using every inch of available tape to follow them during their trips - is interpreted by Ghanavision boss Asante-Smith as an act of insubordination. In Two Thousand Seasons, Isanusi's refusal to serve the interests of the palace, "to use his gift of eloquence to mystify the people, [gives the king and his courtiers the occasion to have him declared mad and] thrown out of the people's protection." Of Baako, Ayo Mamadu further writes: "Baako, declared mad, is pursued in a manner which recalls the hunting of the dog pronounced mad by the crowd (...) and caught and put away in an asylum." (Mamadu, 1985, 517). In a similar way Udomo declares Mabi mad and throws him out of the country.

The three characters referred to here - Mabi, Baako, and Isanusi - are all unhappy artists. All three are declared mad and isolated from the rest of the society for their reluctance to espouse the prevailing ideology. These artists are described as being subject to a deep pain. This results, on the one hand, from their exceptional qualities; it is "the price exacted for their privileged abilities (very much in the tradition of Tiresias) to see more clearly, to feel more keenly, and articulate more eloquently than others." (Mamadu, 1985, 518). As a result, they are regularly alone. Mabi,

for instance, is the one who used to live alone in London, while the others shared their flat with other people. After his short stay in Panafrica during which he attempted to immerse himself into his tribal origins, he goes back to London. Like Lanwood, it is here that he feels home and secure, away from the painful reality. This is reflected in his letter to Lois in which he tells her: "Tell me I can come and lie in the sun with you and dream as we dreamed before Udomo came and brought reality into our lives."(Udomo, 309).

In his own words, he confesses that he belongs to a world of dream whereas Udomo is part of real life and deals with reality. In his rehabilitation of Udomo, Mabi understands that if he has become an outsider it is because he is not in tune with traditions, and also because he has failed to understand the requirements of the political game. His exclusive preoccupation with moral values - Udomo called him" Mr Moral Mabi" - cuts him off from reality. His desire to remain faithful to a certain vision, certain values, is not compatible with a desire to serve society, so long as - like the Man in The Beautyful Ones who is obsessed by the cleanliness of the means - he is not ready to make any concessions. As he tells Lois in his letter,

> I think he [Udomo] and Mhendi were the only ones who knew the price of what had to be done. And he was the only one among us prepared to pay it. Tom couldn't face the reality of Africa today, so he came back here and died a broken man within a month of his return. But of all of us I think I've been the most useless, the most ineffectual. I betrayed everybody and everything: You, Mhendi, Africa, yes, and Udomo, and my art as well. (Udomo, 307).

The artist doing his *mea culpa* and rehabilitating the others in their expectations is an attitude that has already been mentioned in connection with Baako in Ayi Kwei Armah's Fragments. As he is segregated in the Acute Ward of the mental hospital, Baako sees all past events in a mental flashback. In his view he has become "The Eagle That Refused to Soar". The others were only looking for "something not so far from themselves, this nothingness they were dying to leave behind." (Fragments, 175). He had no right to deny his mother's expectant smile the well deserved fruit of her womb. For both Mabi and Baako the artist is seen as someone who is bound to fail. Mabi for instance wonders "now that it's too late anyway [if] an artist is to make a mess of anything except being an artist." (Udomo, 309). Both are convinced that they have provoked their own doom. They share the idea of having understood too late, despite the warning of others. As Baako says,

> That refusal of ritual joy certainly spoke to them of some horrifying inner shrinking of a soul measuring everything [...] And Efua was right to think of the returned one as the fruit of her womb. [...]
> Then again all was clear now, and it was too late anyway. [...] There had also been warnings from Naana, and the old woman had been right in her blindness: he had heard her but always in the end he had ignored her, just as he had missed the signs flowing out to him from his mother. She was right. (Fragments, 175-6).

In the words of Mabi, Udomo too was right. In retrospect, and again now that it is too late - Udomo had been murdered by the tribalists - he was the only one who understood the true nature of tribalism. In his rehabilitation of Udomo Mabi now describes him as a great man whose action are beyond the notion of good and evil.

Though the intention was to oppose the liminal figures with the conforming ones, it must be admitted that, either in Fragments or in The Beautyful Ones, the latter exist only as negatives of the liminal focal figures. Therefore, although we originally intended to oppose the conforming to the unconforming ones, only atypical figures are examined, the conforming ones being always there as an implicit term of the comparison.

While presenting the liminal figures in Fragments, Derek Wright refers to the few sensitive souls like Baako and Modin who, in the process of crossing and returning, go through a ceremonial, a ritual passage that transforms them completely. They are the atypical ones in so far as they "bring an intangible and unrecognized cargo [and] return altered and remain in the grip of a kind of death process...". As opposed to these atypical ones, the Brempongs and Asante-Smiths of Fragments go through

> an empty ceremonial which corresponds to nothing in reality since [for them] the ritual passage entails no suffering and little transformation [...] They return full of the materialistic pomp and power that Africa sent them forth to acquire, and they conform to the general expectations by feeding back into their societies what keeps the latter stagnant, unproductive and dependent. (Wright D., 1985, 341)

The 'been-to's represented in Armah's novels - Baako in particular - are situated at a spiritual threshold. If they have actually undergone the mythical geographical journey of the crossing, they also bear the symptoms of more spiritual changes that are linked to their being part of some established *rites de passage*. As Richard Priebe indicates, the crossing is not a mere process of separation, initiation and return, but it is, at the

origin, part of a myth in which [a] hero ventures forth from a world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won; the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man." (Priebe, 1976, 102).

In his emphasis on the nature of the change undergone by the hero/'been-to', Priebe justly puts the accent on a phenomenon of death and rebirth, as he reads it in Campbell for whom "the hero had died as a modern man; but as eternal man- perfected, unspecific, universal man- he has been reborn. His solemn task and deed therefore [...] is to return to us, transfigured, and teach the lesson he has learned of life renewed." (Priebe, 1976, 102).

Despite the religious aspect of the previous remarks, the analysis applies quite well to the central characters in Armah's novels. The patterns described here can be recognized in any of the three novels; more important however is the fact that the focal figures are all "characters who live on the margin of society, a veritable brotherhood in opposition to the values by which those inside society live their lives" (Priebe, 1976, 103). For Priebe therefore, both Baako and Modin are to be regarded as being "mythical heroes" who, by being simultaneously outsiders and insiders, i.e. at the same time representative of their own group and outside their group, are rather anti-heroes. Since these stand in an undefined zone between "pure possibility" and reality, in "a time and place of withdrawal from normal or social action" (Priebe, 1976, 104), and dedicate their effort to the "scrutinization of the central values and axioms" of their society, these heroes/anti-heroes fit, or rather do not fit, into a well-ordered society. What Priebe identifies in the structure of Armah's novels, in his use of symbols in particular, is the fact that " the structure, or more accurately, the anti-structure of the societies he has rendered in each of his novels is a photographic negative of a well-ordered society." (Priebe, 1976, 106)

In other words, the point is to show how the imagery and symbolic structure of Armah's novels not only refer to that "twilight zone of society's margins [and that] shadowy landscape" (Priebe, 1976, 107-8) the central figures live in, but also to show how the nature of the novelist's fictional imagery and symbolism reflects the social confrontational structures the author describes. By way of comparison, Priebe underlines how well the heroes of Armah compare with Murano in Wole Soyinka's play The Road.

For Baako and Modin, the origin of their inability to adapt in society is to be found in the nature of their adventure overseas in so far as this

determines the extent to which the returned one either becomes an insider in an ordered society or an outsider/outcast who is no longer able to find the well-ordered structure he was able to imagine.

In the first chronological phase of this crossing which begins with the separation from the "loved ones," society is often presented as a well-ordered whole in which everything has, or is supposed to have, its predetermined place and function. The departure ceremony organized on the eve of Baako's going away will serve here the purpose of our illustration. In this scene which covers the whole length of chapter one (Naana) of Fragments there are three characters whose behaviour points to the dual meaning of the ceremony: Naana, Baako, and Foli. Foli performs the libations according to a modern version of the ceremony, whereas Naana acts as the novel's "repository of traditional wisdom" (Wright D., 1985, 337); she stands for the watcher, the one whose function is to make sure that the ceremony is performed as it should be. As she says in a retrospective examination of the ceremony "I watched everything that night [...] Nothing at all was left out. The uncle called upon the nephew the protection of the old ones gone before. The circle was not broken." (Fragments, 3).

In the description of the ceremony only a few short passages refer to the person concerned: Baako. In these passages, he is present and absent at the same time. Nowhere is he shown to really take part in the ceremony: "[f]or him all this withering was something from another place" (9). But beyond the impatience his grandmother thinks she reads in his eyes, beyond the "smile of the young on his face" and the tears provoked by his swallowing the ritual drink, there is only a faceless person. He has already been awarded a certain form of death. He has become a spirit as it is suggested by the episode of his boarding the plane at Accra airport :

> ... I saw Baako roaming in unknown, forbidden places, just born there again after a departure and a death somewhere. He had arrived from beneath the horizon and standing in a large place that was open and filled with many winds, he was lonely. But suddenly he was not alone, but walking among many people. All the people were white people all knowing only how to speak the white people's languages [...] But Baako walked among them neither touched nor seen, like a ghost in an overturned world in which all human flesh was white. And some of these people bore in their arms things of a beauty so great that I thought then in my soul this was the way the spirit land must be. Only it was a beauty that frightened also, and before I could remember again that he was not yet gone I had made in my fear a hurried asking for protection on Baako's head. (Fragments, 10-11)

While describing a scene which belongs to the modern and material world, the passage above conveys references to a more spiritual and metaphysical

one. The prevailing whiteness recalls the Akan world of spirits, and Baako, in the eyes of Naana, becomes a ghostly creature which undergoes a ritual death. This ritual however is a perverted one. As Wright indicates

> [t]he traditional religious concept of a continuous circuit of passage through a world of ancestor spirits, into which this world's dying are reborn and from which outgoing spirits become the material world's new births, is given a warped parody in the ritual 'death', spiritualization, and ghostly return of modern Ghana's cargo-bringers. (Wright D., 1985, 338)

The much expected return in the traditional vision is reduced to mere "dislocated rituals" which in the words of Gerald Moore can be illustrated by "Baako's libation ceremony [during which] the air was [...] fouled with the gross material expectations of his other relatives." (Moore G, 1974, 70). Moore further aptly compares the departing one to a "victim slain upon the altar of their desires, so that his ghost might return from over the water bearing rich gifts for the living" (Moore, 1974, 70).

The corruption of the old myths is best expressed in the words of Baako. Telling Juana about his apprehensive attitude, he explains that he does not want to be the way the new myth expects a 'been-to' to act and to bring material happiness to his relatives at the expense of the community. To him the old myth of the hero bringing victory for the whole community at the expense of an external enemy is no longer valid. The enemy is within the community now. In so doing Baako points to the conflictual relationships that are going to shape his contact as an artist with the social environment.

By being identified with the archetype of the '*ancien combattant*' Solo constitutes the first category in Modin's classification. In this respect a further analysis of Solo's character makes the issue clearer. Solo is shown as being one incapable of real action. All he does is hesitate and create theoretical models in his mind. As he says,

> What is ordained for us I have not escaped - the fate of the 'évolué', the turning of the assimilated African ... into an eater of crumbs in the house of slavery... creating in our own minds spaces we know do not exist, in our lives. The few who try sincerely to create in this life those new spaces they have found in their minds, this life destroys them so easily.... (Why?, 84)

Like the '*invalide de guerre*' he meets at the hospital in Laccryville, he is obsessed by an idea: '*l'essence de la révolution*'. And although he is able to put it down on paper and make a striking graphic representation of the concept he, like the '*ancien combattant*', is out of touch and is no

longer useful. He does not belong to the "few who sincerely try to create". As he says, "Even before my death I have become a ghost, wandering about the face of the earth, moving with a freedom I have not chosen, something whose unsettling abundance I am impotent to use." (11). Solo clearly situates himself at the margin of society. He sees himself in a foreign world, looking at life as if it were a stream with which

> There is no contact possible. Life goes on around me, and with a clarity that has grown sharply painful, I see it flow like a stream in a slow motion... Only there is no portion of the stream, no part of all this flowing life, into which I can fling myself and say: 'Here I belong. This is my home. Here I shall do the work of my life'. I am not able to see my way back into the stream, and now I do not even know if there is left in me any desire to go back in. (Why?, 11)

Solo depicts himself as a typical '*blasé*', living only in an inward-looking world. In this respect he is very much like Teacher in The Beautyful Ones and it is significant that both of them are shown to be reading the same book, from one novel to the other: Kazantsakis' He Who Must Die. In fact, while insisting on the similarity between the two characters, we would like to show that both Solo and Teacher are marginal figures who, if they are not at least spiritually dead, are shown to belong to the past. As far as Solo is concerned, his taking refuge in Laccryville is the consequence of his failure. As Fraser has pointed out, he hangs around the bureau of the People's Union of Congheria where he has "the status of an affectionately regarded invalid". In this respect we can see the '*invalide de guerre*' he meets at the hospital as a literary representation of Solo's psychological double.

Because he was not feeling very well, feeling too guilty in the eyes of the beggars and the crippled he meets every day on his way home and back to work, Solo seeks admission to the hospital where he spends a few days in a kind of physical seclusion which he refers to as "a time of withdrawal from the world (at the end of which) the disturbing impressions that daily existence forces upon my consciousness had been stopped from coming into me."(48). During his stay there he meets another patient. It is not quite clear whether "the man with one leg" has a definite physical illness or not, but according to the obsessive preoccupation he mentions to Solo, it is rather his mind which seems to be affected. He was in the revolution and he lost one of his legs during the fight. To the question he asks Solo, "what is the essence of the revolution?" he himself brings an answer clearly referring to his personal case: "Those who offer themselves up to be killed, to be maimed and driven insane, those who go beyond what is even possible for other human beings in their pursuit of the revolution, they are its

essence."(26)

Solo understands the question of the invalid so clearly that he is able to put his words into a diagram where "[t]he truck represents society. Any society. Heavy. With the corrupt ones, the opportunists, the drugged, the old, the young, everybody in it. And then there are the militants, pushing the whole massive thing from the lower to the higher level. But they themselves are destroyed in the process."(27)

Both Solo and "the man with one leg" were once militants who joined the maquis. The one-legged man has obviously left it because the war is now over, but we do not know anything about Solo's reasons for leaving the maquis. We only guess that it is because of some kind of failure. As a result both of them are dropped on the side of the road, useless and in doubt. As the man says, "I was in the revolution [but now] I don't know. I search. One can say that I am on a search." (23). Solo too is on a search and it is because he identifies so well with him that the man with one leg is made to represent Solo's conscience as indicated in the following passage: "I was very much aware now of the presence of the Man with one leg... I could feel his eyes boring into the back of my head, demanding answers I could never give, breaking into every train of thought by which I sought to escape from his presence. His question kept coming back to me."(24)

In quite a similar way this is also true for Teacher in The Beautyful Ones. The questions the Man asks keep coming to the mind of the Teacher for as he tells him, "I suppose we are all that... All chichidodos, those of us whose entrails are not hard enough for the national game." (The Beautyful Ones, 55). The feeling of guilt which Solo has while meeting the beggars in Laccryville is represented here in a strikingly similar way. Telling the Man about why he has chosen this cowardly retreat, Teacher says :

> I know I am nothing and will never be anything without them, and when most I wish to stop being nothing, then the desire to run back to those I have fled comes back with unbearable strength. Until I see again those loving arms outstretched, bringing me their gift of death. Then I stop and come back here, living my half-life of loneliness. (The Beautyful Ones, 56).

Teacher has chosen to retreat into his "half-life of loneliness not only in order to avoid the loving arms of the "loved ones", but also because he is unable to meet their expectations. In so behaving, Teacher gives the reader reasons to identify him further with Solo. And in this respect, the episode of the beggars is quite revealing :

> There are the real beggars, the grown up ones... It is impossible to tell who among these were the real beggars

> before the revolution, and who were beggared by the hemorrhage itself. All I am aware of when I walk past them is a general feeling of guilt, as if somehow I were responsible for their having been reduced to this state... As soon as I have dropped the dispensable coin in the beggar's hand and seen the fawning look of gratitude come over his face, I feel an urge to escape from the place, and more than once I have gone running away stopping only when... I could not see the beggar any more ... I avoid their eyes. Even when in their mouths and faces they present a smile to the condescending giver, I see in their eyes a deeper knowledge of what is happening to them and a resentment of the fact that they are reduced to begging while someone else is elevated to the position of bountiful giver. (Why?, 16-7)

Teacher's "doctrine of withdrawal," as Gareth Griffiths calls it, emerges from his desire to escape the call of the loved ones. Like Solo who has chosen the retreat into hospital to avoid the general feeling of guilt he sees in the eyes of the beggars, Teacher, in the words of Leonard Kibera, is "safe from commitment... He is dipping into a Greek writer as we encounter him on the bed, naked, transparent." (Kibera, 1979, 69). Like Solo who admits he has become like a ghost, Teacher, like Rama Krishna to whom he is compared, has calmly and resignedly chosen to embrace death and confesses, "I am also one of the dead people', he says, 'the walking dead. A ghost. I died long ago. So long ago that not even the old libations of living blood will make me live again." (Why?, 71). In the expression of this form of spiritual death however, both Kolawole Ogunbesan and Gareth Griffiths see a form of cowardice. For the former, "[h]is isolation is not the same thing as freedom, for the truest freedom is that which issues into action. To act is to be committed, and to be committed is to be in danger. But Teacher is a coward." (Ogungbesan, 1973, 11).

This concept of cowardice is also accepted by Gareth Griffiths who reinforces it by a quotation from Frantz Fanon. He writes that what Teacher has learned is that "[n]o one has clean hands; we are soiling them in the swamps of our country and in the terrifying emptiness of our brains. Every onlooker is either a coward or a traitor."(Griffiths, 1971, 5, quoting Sartre's introduction to Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth)

-the defeated ones: the veterans

While referring to the characters of the Teacher in The Beautyful Ones, Ocran in Fragments, and the invalid in Why Are We So Blest?, the point is to underline the recurrence of the figure of the veteran. The veterans described share a certain number of common characteristics. They all belong to an older generation and therefore have been witnesses or actors in times of trouble or difficulty. If he did not take part in World War II for

instance, Teacher has a first-hand knowledge of post-war as well as pre- and post-independence Ghana. The same disillusionment is to be encountered with Ocran who still clings to the old values and is not fascinated by the newly-erected gods. This is also true of the invalid who did not only take part in the war and lost a leg but is also the witness of the disintegration of the ideals he fought for. By sharing a certain disillusionment as regards the period they live in, the veterans have a tendency to live in separation. Teacher lives in total seclusion and indicates by his choice of physical nakedness his rejection of ties of any kind that would connect him to society. Ocran is a marginal whose only means of expression resides in his sculptures. The invalid in Why Are We So Blest? lives in seclusion in hospital and doubtless he will not recover his sanity if he is taken back into his social milieu.

Another characteristic of these veterans is their common concern with truth and meaning. The invalid is obsessed by the meaning of the freedom fighters' sacrifice, and the ultimate function and meaning of the revolution. So is Teacher who, although he has given up and withdrawn, is nevertheless interested in finding a way out of corruption. On top of this truth-seeking attitude we notice that there is, between the central figures and their mentors, a relationship of 'connivance'. Teacher and the Man have known each other for long and share the same disgust, Ocran and Baako are both artists who share the same feelings, whereas Solo and the invalid also share the same concern while looking for truth and meaning. But although these veterans play an important role in the novels by advising the focal figures on how to behave they do not tend to represent actual characters but act more like types or archetypal figures.

In both The Beautyful Ones and Fragments the Man and Baako are similar because they both feel the need to confide in a mentor[6]. The inexperienced man of The Beautyful Ones pays a visit to Teacher because he wants to know whether he is wrong or not. In quite a similar manner, the newly-returned 'been-to' of Fragments confides in Juana and Ocran because he finds in them the only persons who understand his own preoccupations. Juana, by being both a foreigner and a psychiatrist can remain uninfluenced by the surroundings and offer objective advice. Similarly his former teacher Ocran who, by being retired and no longer in touch with the newly-erected gods of modern Ghana, can judge society with a certain detachment.

However if this detachment is one of the characteristics of the mentors we find in Armah's first two novels, there is nevertheless a noticeable difference between Juana and Teacher for example for, if the nakedness of the latter symbolizes the negation of the much desired suit (which is the

definition *per se* of Koomson and Brempong) he remains totally concerned by what has been happening around him since the soldiers returned from the war. On the contrary Juana remains totally unaffected by the pathological behaviour of her patients. As she herself admits, whenever the pressure becomes unbearable, she takes a ride to the sea-side or goes abroad to forget it for a while.

As it is recalled in chapter six in a flashback which constitutes a shortcut to the history of Ghana and its politics since World War II, Teacher belongs to the veterans who have witnessed the rapid decay of a system in which they have invested all their hopes. To him Ghana is to be compared to the "Manchild," a picture exhibited by one of his classmates long ago while they were in Standard Five. As Teacher explains,

> It has been born with all the features of a human baby but within seven years it had completed the cycle from babyhood to infancy to youth, to maturity and old age, and in its seventh year it had died a natural death.... The Manchild looked more irretrievably old, far more thoroughly decayed that any ordinary old man could ever have looked. But of course it, too, had a nature of its own, so that only those who have found some solid ground they can call natural will feel free to call it unnatural. And where is my solid ground these days? (The Beautyful Ones, 63)

The truth and solid ground he was desperately trying to cling to have been swept by a series of disappointments, a fact which explains his determination not to be "entranced by the voice, even if it should swell as it did during the days of hope. [He] will not be entranced since [he] ha[s] seen the destruction of the promises it had made."(63)

At another level however, one can see in Teacher the archetypal figure of the '*invalide de guerre*' and the '*blasé*', and we can therefore identify him with the veteran Solo meets in the hospital. The Algerian is one who took part in the revolution, a liberation war which culminated in the granting of independence. After a sacrifice of seven years, the ones who survived the fight had high hopes for the future of the country. They were quickly disappointed however for after the military coup of 1965, a team of arrivists took the political power and quickly forgot the promises of the newly acquired independence. It is in this particular context of general disillusionment that the invalid wonders "who gained? who gained? who gained?" (Why?, 25)

A similar doubt and disillusionment can be read in Teacher's behaviour as well. Teacher is a Ghanaian who was profoundly marked by the years following the second world war. The war, in the words of Kolawole Ogungbesan, had carried a great dislocation of the psyches of the veterans and those they

left behind... Many people who could not cope with the collapse of the traditional order which had been their refuge simply went mad. Many more went to the other extreme and retreated "very quickly into a silence that no one could penetrate; something so deep that it completely swallowed men who had before been strong: they just plunged into this deep silence and died."(The Beautyful Ones, 76)

As illustrated by the evocation of Teacher's younger days with Manaan and Kofi Billy, some of them were so disillusioned and despairing that in order to cope with their spiritual malaise they had to turn to thievery, alcohol and wee (i.e. marijuana). This "form of escape from despair," as Ogungbesan puts it, was introduced by Manaan but was soon to give way to another seemingly more efficient and longer-lasting curative. She came to announce the arrival of a new leader, the Osagyefo, Kwame Nkrumah.

As Teacher reports it, he was himself among the listeners turned into believers for he acknowledges that in Nkrumah's speech there "was more potency than mere words. These dipped inside the listener, making him go with the one who spoke"(The Beautyful Ones, 101). While admitting that he identified himself totally with the new leader he wonders how, after the military coup which toppled Nkrumah, this could "have grown so rotten with such obscene haste?". Symbolically this is rendered into the metaphor of the Manchild. For Kolawole Ogungbesan,

> Nkrumah's regime is symbolized by the manchild which Aboliga the Frog showed to Teacher from his book of freaks and oddities when both of them were kids in the primary school. Within the space of seven years, the manchild had completed a life-cycle, from birth to natural death. Compared with other nations, Ghana seemed to have aged too soon, just as the manchild in its gray old age looked more irretrievably old, far more thoroughly decayed than any ordinary man could ever have looked. (Ogungbesan, 1973, 16)

Like the Afrasian country after the coup of 1965, it could be said that "for the nation itself there would be only a change of the hunters and the hunted. A pitiful shrinking of the world from those days Teacher still looked back to, when the single mind was filled with the hopes of a whole people."(The Beautyful Ones, 191)

Teacher is the old one who has known colonial Ghana and belongs to that generation which has invested much hope in the coming of the Osagyefo. Though he has apparently not taken part in World War II at least he was closely acquainted with some of the veterans to whom the involvement of Ghana in the war constituted a devastating experience. As he explains it in his conversation with the Man, the post-war climate in Ghana has very much

contributed to shatter the traditional social order which was the only solid ground in the existence of his generation. The hopes they invested in independence have been equally thwarted. It is because of this overall disillusionment that he has chosen to live in seclusion and nakedness and also to cut all family ties.

Though he is in Accra Teacher does not seem to be physically living in Ghana. He is a chronological as well as a geographical exile, an outsider in both time and place. While approaching Teacher's house, the Man hears "[t]he sweet sadness of Congo music (which) flowed out through a window.". Teacher is tuned to a foreign radio. When he tunes to Radio Ghana, it is a sad 'highlife' which is broadcast, " a song [which] deepened the silence of the man on the bed"(The Beautyful Ones, 50). This is why Teacher declares, "I know my life is empty, one thing yours is not. Now all I do is read books of other places, listen to the music of South Africa and the Congo and the Afro-Americans. And often I remember the bitterness and the emptiness of life rise up in me."(The Beautyful Ones, 93-4)

A similar emptiness and meaninglessness of life is felt by Juana, the psychiatrist friend of Baako who is also a possible version of the figure of the veteran. This is why she experiences an increasing need for flight in order to forget that so far her life has been a complete failure. Parallel to Teacher's need for seclusion, Juana often feels a need to escape. This urge comes from the knowledge that the "root of the trouble was deeper" (Fragments,15). As Gikandi writes

> Juana is ultimately the victim of her own knowledge. This is what makes her experiences parallel and reinforce Baako's more tragic experiences. At this junction, it is appropriate to observe the interrelationships of experiences and personal histories in Fragments. Armah constructs his narrative in such a way that individual histories ultimately fall into a pattern to present a profound portrait of a group and personal alienation."(Gikandi, 1987, 89)

Though she unconsciously retains a certain form of hope and believes that "perhaps there would be some meaning waiting for her at the end of a long and aimless drive, that it wasn't true that every important thing that was worthwhile had run slowly out of her life"(Fragments,14), she knows that her anger is useless. Though her job consists in trying to save people from the pervading mess, she comes to the conclusion that her anger is pointless.

While Juana is subject to a feeling of anger, Ocran feels a deeper pain. This pain is symbolically represented in the sculptures that crowd his office, the walls of which were

> lined with rows of black heads in dozens of different attitudes from sweet repose to extreme agony.They had been

> arranged in some kind of rough order, so that the tension captured in the heads seemed progressively to grow less and less bearable, till near the end of the whole series, when Baako almost arrived back at the beginning, the inward torture actually broke the outer form of the human face, and the result, when Baako looked closer, was not any new work of art of his master but the old, anonymous sculpture of Africa.(Fragments, 78)

Ocran's pain results from his loss of hope provoked by an awareness of the hopelessness of the situation in modern Ghana and his tendency to live in the past. Reading and scrutinizing the past is also the main preoccupation of the invalid in Why Are We So Blest?. Coincidentally, Solo and the '*ancien moudjahid*' meet at the hospital's library. When asked about the nature of his readings he reveals he is interested in the revolution, "not ours. The old one. The French Revolution". He is not interested in the revolution as such but he wants to find out who the real winners were. The rest of their conversation reveals he was among the freedom fighters to whom independent Algeria owes its victory.

Revolution and the post-independence period is also among the themes treated by Rachid Boudjedra. In the case of his Topographie it is also examined through the figures of veterans whom he refers to as 'laskars'[7]. The three 'laskars' were certainly contemporaries of the one-legged man; the latter fought in Algeria whereas the former belonged to the 'Fédération de France du FLN'. They once were militants in the struggle for the independence of Algeria, but at present they are restricted to the closed and provincial universe of a village called 'Le Piton' where they are busy indulging in all sorts of reprehensible activities. Because they are the pillars of the present political system in Algeria, the narrator of Topographie, like Teacher, implies that the revolutionary ideals they fought for have long been forgotten. In their attempt to indoctrinate the village people - the village here perhaps standing for the whole nation - the "laskars" prove to be high-flying demagogues.

This figure of the 'laskar' is a quite convenient one for it allows Boudjedra to criticize a whole system. One aspect of this system is the use of religion. The 'laskars' are often described as bigots who use religion only to suit their own needs. Witness these traits about the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca: "ils n'ont pas eu le courage d'aller à la Mecque faire du trafic d'or, alors que quelques naifs - les paysans du Piton par exemple - s'évertuent à attraper des transes autour du tombeau du prophète."(Topographie, 142) [they never dared to go to Mecca and smuggle

back gold while other simpletons such as the peasants of the 'Piton' danced themselves into a trance around the Prophet's tomb.]

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE WORLD IN FRAGMENTS

DESERT-RELATED IMAGERY

Whether referring to the stay overseas globally viewed as being an unsuccessful one, or to the emptiness and meaninglessness of life at home, the prevailing image that seems to obsess the liminal ones is that of the desert. This theme appears in several of the novels examined in this study. Cheikh Hamidou Kane for instance renders the experience of Samba Diallo in Paris in terms that evoke a spiritual desert, one in which humans are no longer humans because they have given way to machines. This view of the spiritual aspect of the desert is further reinforced by Driss Chraibi for whom the concentrationary universe in which the Arabs live in Paris echoes a physical desert that compels the Boucs to live in almost total seclusion. This kind of seclusion is also seen by Armah's protagonists as being an intentional part of a hypocritical educational scheme. The African been-to Modin is the one who realises this and who undertakes a reverse crossing which he will be unable to complete.

Talking about his own contact with the world overseas, the madman in L'Aventure Ambiguë renders his feelings in terms of oppositions. To the features that in his eyes characterise human beings, he opposes qualifiers that relate to a mechanical world, a world of stone, barren, cold and icy. Thus in his description recur words such as *mou, mollesse, nue, nudité, humain, contact, habitée*. which are opposed to others like *dure, carapace, coque, inhumain, mécanique, interdite, vide*:

> L'asphalte... Mon regard parcourait toute l'étendue et ne vit pas de limite à la pierre. Là-bas, la glace du feldspath, ici le gris clair de la pierre, ce noir mat de l'asphalte. Nulle part la tendre mollesse d'une terre nue. Sur l'asphalte dur, mon oreille exacerbée, mes yeux avides guettèrent, vainement, le tendre surgissement d'un pied nu. Alentour, il n'y avait aucun pied. Sur la carapace dure, rien que le claquement d'un millier de coques dures.... Depuis que j'avais débarqué, je n'avais pas vu un seul pied. La marée des conques sur l'étendue de l'asphalte courait à ras. Tout autour du sol au faîte des immeubles, la coquille nue et sonore de la pierre faisait de la rue une vasque de granite. Cette vallée de pierre était parcourue, dans son axe, par un fantastique fleuve de mécaniques enragées.... Sur le haut du pavé qu'elles tenaient pas un être humain qui marchât. Jamais je n'avais vu cela, maître des Diallobé. Là, devant moi, parmi une agglomération habitée, sur de grandes longueurs, il m'était donné de contempler une étendue parfaitement inhumaine, vide d'hommes ... au cœur même de la cité, une étendue interdite à

> sa chair nue, interdite au contact alterné de ses deux pieds"(L'Aventure, 103-4)
> ["The asphalt.. My gaze traversed the entire extent of what lay before me, and I saw no limit to the stony surface: down there, the icy feldspar, here the lightgrey of the stone, the dull black of the asphalt; nowhere the tender softness of the bare earth. On the hard asphalt, my exacerbated ears and my eager eyes were vainly on the look-out for the soft upheaval of earth from a naked foot. There was no foot anywhere around me. On the hard carapace, there was only the clattering of a thousand hard shells... I have not seen one single human foot since I disembarked. All along the asphalt, the tide of shells ran level with it. All around, from the pavement to the house rooftops, the bare and echoing shell of the stone turned the street into a basin of granite. This valley of stone was traversed on its axis by a fantastic river of wild and headstrong mechanisms... On the height of the paved street that they held, there was not one human being walking. Never had I seen that, teacher of the Diallobé. There before me, in a built-up and inhabited area, along great lengths of roadway, it was given to me to contemplate an expanse that was completely dehumanised, empty of men... in the very heart of the city of men, an expanse forbidden to his naked flesh, forbidden to the alternating contact of his two feet...."(Woods, 91-2)]

In his eyes the desert is symbolised in the invasion by cars of spaces that are normally reserved for men[8]. The interpenetration of both areas, of objects belonging to both the mechanical and the human world, is rendered in the predominance of a vocabulary relating to the mechanical world. Thus, despite his efforts, he is unable to see "le tendre surgissement d'un pied nu"["the soft upheaval of earth from a naked foot"(Woods, 91). Instead, what he hears is "le claquement d'un millier de coques dures" ("the clattering of a thousand hard shells"(Woods, 91)]. The feeling of emptiness is further amplified in the effect of resonance that the metallic objects produce on the stone walls, especially as the area which should have been inhabited is now "une étendue parfaitement inhumaine, vide d'hommes.... au cœur même de la cité, une étendue interdite à sa chair nue, interdite au contact alterné de ses deux pieds" [an expanse forbidden to his naked flesh, forbidden to the alternating contacts of his two feet"(Woods, 92)].

It is an equally powerful idea of exclusion, one of further segregation, that is illustrated in Les Boucs. Because they are pariahs, the Boucs are not allowed into the city. They are segregated in a far-away place, a barren area. When Yalann Waldik says that "l'avenir devant nous était bloqué par des pierres"(Les Boucs, 23) ["the future ahead of us was blocked with the rocks" (Harter, 17)] echoing Samba Diallo who notes about the people in

Paris that "leur âme (est) ensablée là-dessous". Like the impersonal universe described by both Samba Diallo and the madman, the area the Boucs live in is like a desert. As in the Paris of L'Aventure Ambiguë, there is no vegetation. The description of the surroundings insists on the presence of lorry carcasses, such as the one the Boucs use for temporary home. In the eyes of Samba Diallo who has become in his own words, a "Malte Laurids Brigge" wandering in Paris searching for his own self, human beings have become objects among other inanimate objects:

> Ces rues sont nues, percevait-il. Non, elles ne sont pas vides. On y rencontre des objets de chair, ainsi que des objets de fer. A part cela, elles sont vides.... Sinon, leur rue est vide, leur temps encombré, leur âme ensablée là-dessous, sous mon gros orteil droit et sous les événements et sous les objets de chair et les objets de fer... les objets de chair...(L'Aventure, 140-1)
>
> ["These streets are bare," he was noticing. "No, they are not empty. One meets objects of flesh in them, as well as objects of metal. Apart from that, they are empty... Otherwise,their street is empty, their time is encumbered, their soul is stilted up down there, under my right big toe, and under the events and under the objects of flesh and the objects of metal - the objects of flesh and..."(Woods, 128-9)].

As meant by Samba Diallo the overriding characteristic of the landscape in Paris is to be found in its barrenness and sterility. In the house in Villejuif where Yalann Waldik stays there is no furniture; even the doors have all been used for firewood. The cat that lives with them is all bones and even his son Fabrice is dying. But not only is the inside of the house barren but the garden is sterile as well. In his eyes, the surrounding world, like the persons around him, are barren. This is confirmed in several passages. Describing the garden to Yalann Waldik Raus says:

> Je le suivis dans le jardin. Ou plutôt dans ce qui avait été le jardin, affirma Raus.... Car ç'avait été un jardin, hurla-t-il, regarde-moi ces arbres, ou plutôt ce qu'il en reste... Tu es venu là un matin, avec deux bras, deux mains, instruments de saccage - et deux yeux pour superviser le chef d'œuvre, comme un coup de cachet. Il y en avait trente sept. Il y en a encore deux.... Ces deux-là qui restent ne sont même plus des arbres. (Les Boucs, 48-9).
>
> ["I followed him into the garden. "Or what used to be the garden," asserted Raus.... "Because this used to be a garden," he howled. "Look at those trees, or what's left of them. You came here one morning, with two good arms, two legs, and they were your weapons for the sacking. And two good eyes to supervise your masterwork, and to give approval.... Once there were thirty-seven of them. Now there are only two.... The two trees left aren't really trees anymore."(Harter, 33)]

This state of sterility is also shown to affect human beings. As if the cemented floor of the house itself had some kind of influence on the inhabitants, ("le sol cimenté," the cemented floor), Yalann Waldik reckons that ""maintenant dans sa tête tout était de ciment"(128) ["Everything inside his head was cement"(Harter, 82)] and this brings on him a kind of deep pessimism, an absence of hope. Even their own beliefs are transformed accordingly. As he notices, the Boucs sing verses from a modernized Koran "où il était question d'os de la terre transformés par l'homme en ciment et d'hommes transformés en ciment armé"(188) ["in which it was a question of the bones of the earth transformed by man into cement and of man transformed into reinforced concrete"(Harter, 119)]

To the unexpected hostility of inanimate matter is added another unfriendly manifestation: that of elements such as the wind. At night for example Yalann Waldik remarks that "La nuit est tout à coup tombée, et maintenant noir est le vent, plus libre, plus sauvage."(Les Boucs, 58) ["Night suddenly fallen, and the wind is black and even freer and more savage."(Harter, 38)] Like the cement which is associated with a form of destruction, the wind is equally shown to be capable of destroying human beings. Its first evident victims are the Boucs themselves for as Yalann says, "le vent nous balayait tous"(20) ["The wind was sweeping everything away"(Harter, 16)]. The feelings of the characters are transposed and it is the wind that says them and vice-versa:

> Les injures du vent, Raus, cassant la porte, tout à l'heure les avait dites. Il les disait tous les jours, à chaque pas de ses longues pérégrinations à travers Paris, toutes les nuits il les ronflait. Je les avais si souvent entendues qu'elles étaient devenues litanies. *Bicot*, disait le vent, *malfrat*,*arabe*, *crouillat*, *sidi*, *noraf*...(19).
> ["The cursing of the wind, Raus breaking up the door, had said all the insulting words a little while ago. He said them that very day, with every step he took on his long walks through Paris. Every night he snored them.. I had heard them so often they were a kind of litany. Dirty Arab, said the wind, and all the other names the French used to show their scorn for us: *malfrat*, *arabe*, *crouillat*, *sidi*, *noraf*..."(Harter,15)]

In the mind of Yalann Waldik too, there is no difference between the wind and what he calls the hostile Christians, as opposed to the Muslims who are their victims. As he is having an argument with Simone, he hears the voices of the neighbours worrying about her:

> j'entendis un appel qui était un nom: Simone!... Mais ce ne furent que des voix, chrétiennes elles aussi. et je pensais: ou le vent. Le bourdonnement du vent. Il est devenu chrétien lui aussi. Je me montrais à la fenêtre je ne l'ouvrais pas... un groupe de vieilles et de vieux, attroupés devant la haie de

> troènes; à ma vue, des bras se tendaient, des poings frappaient l'air, frénétiques. Lentement, je leur tournai le dos. De simples feuilles mortes poussées contre la haie par le vent.(83)
> ["two or three times from somewhere, I heard someone call a name: Simone! ... But they were Christian voices, nothing more. And I thought: *or the wind. The humming of the wind. It has become Christian too.* I went over to the window, but I did not open it... there was a group of old women and men gathered behind the privet hedge. Their fists shook frenetically in the air. Slowly I turned my back on them. The wind blew dead leaves against the shrubbery."(Harter, 53)]

Its other victims are the elderly who are living in the neighbourhood in Villejuif, like the old Josepha who is described in the following way by Yalann Waldik: "Blanche de cheveux, blanche de peau, d'os et même de chair, si au delà de la vieillesse et peut-être de l'humain que le vent sauvage l'a sans doûte dû broyer, pour la libérer en une poignée de poudre blanche - sel basique de la respectabilité des âmes pieuses, que je souhaite rejoindre la poussière impondérable du temps."(59) [""With white hair, white skin, white bones and flesh, so far gone beyond old age and what used to be a human being that the savage wind must have swept her away, freeing her in a handful of white powder, the basic salt of respectability of pious souls. I wished them all reunion with the imponderable dust of time."(Harter, 39)]

To the destructive power of the wind is added another destructive element: that of the fire. Fire as an essential element that permits the Boucs to keep warm, therefore to survive, but also fire as the manifestation of their destructive instincts as they are exacerbated by the hostile universe outside. In this respect Raus apprehends things and objects depending on whether they are combustible or not. A door, a tree, or a book are indiscriminately used to keep the fire burning. When Yalann Waldik mentions to him that Mac O'Mac is a writer who has sold 100,000 copies of his book Sainte Famille, the only thing Raus thinks of it is "Que de combustible!" ["Lot of stuff to burn"](Harter, 45)

As is implied by this remark fire is not only a process of destruction, but it is also one whereby things lose their meaning. One of the functions of fire is illustrated in the almost ritualistic dance the Boucs organise in the open. As they all meet to welcome the arrival of two new members - Yalann and Isabelle - fire is also treated as a sign of rejoicing:

> Tard dans la nuit, on dansa. On avait allumé un autre feu de bois, mais celui-là était gigantesque et pétaradant. On l'enjambait avec des cris de joie et, par instants, quand il baissait, un corps consumable (pneu, caisse, carton, bille de bois...) surgissait on ne savait d'où ni au bout de quel bras, et y était lancé avec adresse: le feu reprenait plus fort et

augmentait le rythme de la danse.(191)
["They danced late into the night. They had lit another wood fire, but the second one was a big one and cracked noisily. They would leap over it with cries of delight, and when it went down, a piece of something flammable, a tire or a box, a carton or a bit of lumber, would come out of nowhere from no one, and onto the pile it would go. The fire would start up again, and the dance would resume its rhythm."(Harter, 121).]

Beyond this primary meaning however, it is implied that the meaning of things and the personality of the characters fade in the flames. It is not only question of an external fire, but this time the fire is internal. In the mind of Waldik, another fire is consuming him. Speaking of a chair he placed in the fireplace he reflects:

> La chaise s'était maintenant tout à fait affaisée.... à son sens, une chaise, produit de cette civilisation qui se soucie de la sueur de l'homme, ne représente somme toute que des bouts de bois, au même titre qu'une bûche ou un fagot.Je l'entendais se consumer comme si elle eût chuchoté une confidence, mais je ne me trompais pas: c'était d'ultimes injures. Et je me pris à m'imaginer, dans la cheminée me consumant à mon tour à partir des restes fumants de cette chaise comme d'une braise, comme on allume une cigarette à l'aide d'un mégot: j'eusse chuchoté le regret d'avoir vécu...(Les Boucs, 63, emphasis mine)
> ["The chair was completely consumed by now.... In his concept, a chair, that product of civilization that smiles at the sweat of a man, represents nothing more than a log or a faggot. I heard the chair burn up as if it had whispered a secret, but I had made no mistake: it was the ultimate offense. And I began to fantasize, in the fireplace that was consuming me in my turn along with the smoking remains of that chair now just an ember, as one lights a cigarette from the butt of another: I could have whispered my regret at having lived."(Harter, 40-1)]

For Baako too, destruction by fire is inevitable. As his attempt to communicate with the illiterate masses through an original television script is rejected by his boss at Ghanavision, the manuscript ends up in the fire. This idea of a fire that consumes people without their being aware of it is also rendered in the symbolism of the names, or rather of the nicknames the protagonists are given in Les Boucs. For the persons concerned it is a change of status. For Driss Chraibi the name has an important function as it gives its bearer an identity. The loss of the name therefore stands for a loss of identity. Hence the recurrence of surnames in Les Boucs. In "Lettre de Nord Africains," Chraibi cites other nicknames of unemployed people: Zero, Rien, Ane et Demi, Caporal... Houaria Kadra-Hadjadji, who mentions this passage, quotes an interview of the novelist where he declares

> Les compagnons de misère, au contraire, étaient entrés dans un processus irréversible de déshumanisation, illustrée dans le roman par la perte de l'identité des boucs. De son vrai nom Mohammed Ibn Bachir Ibn Moussadik Ould Abou Issa Ibn Al Moutalib Ait Ahmed Laaraichi, il avait été surnommé Raus dans un camp de déportation, "une simple négation, une simple éjection. (Kadra-Hadjadji, 1986, 66).
> [On the contrary, the companions of misfortune had entered an irreversible process of dehumanisation, illustrated in the novels by the butts' loss of identity. His real name was Mohammed Ibn Bachir Ibn Moussadik Ould Abou Issa Ibn Al Moutalib Ait Ahmed Laaraichi, but in a concentration camp he was nicknamed Raus, "a simple negation, a simple ejection"]

This process of negation is sometimes a conscious one. Among some Algerian emigrants in France whom I have personally known, it was a current practice to adopt a Christian name, under the false pretense that the Algerian one was too difficult to pronounce. Thus, to quote only two examples among a variety of others, Said became Antonio or Tonio, Kiki was preferred to Ahcène... Behind this name-swapping however the aim these emigrants had in mind was a better integration. Another example of characters exchanging their original names for foreign ones is to be found in Aké Loba's Kocoumbo l'étudiant noir. The change of name if justified for Durandeau by the fact that

> Pour lui, Kocouto était un nom de sauvage. Ce n'était que les sauvages qui admettaient les K, les K qui font claquer les mâchoires comme celles d'un crocodile affamé. On savait que le français admettait rarement les K. Durandeau n'était pas un primitif pour conserver un nom rude qui vous fracassait le tympan. Il préférait, cela va sans dire, un nom doux, harmonieux, qui vous laissait dans l'oreille une certaine musicalité. Il sortait d'une "grande école" et par conséquent se disait plus Européen qu'Africain.(Kocoumbo, 70)
> [For him Kocouto was a savage's name. Only savages could admit K's, the K's that made jaws clatter like those of a starving crocodile. It was known for a fact that the French rarely used K's. Durandeau was not that primitive as to keep such a harsh name that shattered the listener's eardrum. It was obvious that he preferred a soft, harmonious name, that left you a certain musicality in the ear. After all, he had graduated from a "grande école," and therefore felt he was more European than African.]

In L'Aventure Ambiguë too, we notice that one of the main characters loses his real name in the process of going abroad. On his return, when the madman started telling his story, obviously nobody either understood or believed him: "Il parlait peu et cela depuis qu'on avait commencé à le surnommer 'le fou'.... assez vit on commença de mettre ses propos en

doute.... Un jour il sut qu'on l'avait surnommé 'le fou'. Alors, il se tut."(98-99) ["He spoke little - and that was since people had begun to call him 'the fool'... But fairly soon, people began to doubt his recitals.... One day he found out that he had been nicknamed 'the fool'. Upon that he relapsed into silence"(Woods, 78-80)]. To the people of the Diallobé the process is irreversible. He is now known to them as 'the fool' to the exclusion of any other name. Though Samba Diallo has had the privilege of retaining his own name at the end of his European adventure, he has lost in the process something more valuable: it is his own soul. He has in his own words returned a hybrid.

This process of depersonalisation is again described in the novels of Ayi Kwei Armah, especially in Why Are We So Blest?. For Modin Dofu, one of the protagonists of the novel, the destructive influence of the stay overseas is rendered in the image of an evil rite in which the protagonists, like all the Africans whom he meets in the United States of America, lose their originality. This can be read in Why Are We so Blest in the recurrence of blasés characters and ghost-like figures such as Solo Nkonam and Modin Dofu who undertake a voyage overseas in the illusory hope that they will thus give their lives a meaning.

Not unlike the Boucs described by Chraibi, the Africans referred to by Armah are the victims of a state of spiritual death. Solo for instance is an intellectual who has unsuccessfully tried to join a liberation movement in his country. Being rejected, Afrasia stands for him as a land of refuge. As he says while referring to Afrasian people "[t]hey are certain they are in a struggle that gives answers to the ultimate why of life, making tomorrow's revolution. Their entrails have an iron toughness mine do not have." (Why?, 13). The determination and toughness of the Afrasians are opposed to Solo's own acknowledged impotence and absence of hope. He is aware that he has become a "ghost wandering about the face of the earth" (11), unable to make any decision except for hanging around in the offices of the Congherian people's revolutionary movement and doing unrewarding translations for the Jeune Nation magazine (i.e. Jeune Afrique). The pervading climate is one of inachievement and sterility, a state which Baako reaches probably after his stay in Portugal. He for example refers to himself as being a writer who is unable to write. He is full of reproaches for he describes himself as being both impotent and inactive: "I have not written yet, and most probably, I never will write. Everything, like my sorrow, will be forced inward. There it will become a poison eating into me, and the only thing it will sour will be the rest of my own days." (13).

This feeling of unachievement and uselessness later provokes his sickness: "All my apertures ran with fluid, living and clean, escaping a body unable to hold them: blood, urine, vomit, tears, diarrhea, pus"(114) and he is admitted to hospital where he meets another useless protagonist: the veteran.It has been shown earlier that this desire to go to hospital is a refuge-seeking reflex. whereby he escapes a reality with which he cannot cope as he returns to a closed and safer milieu.

For the veteran of Why Are We So Blest?, the universe of the hospital is certainly that of the last chance. Having sacrificed his health for the revolution, he now realises that he is no longer needed in the outside world. He is a handicapped man whom nobody wants to see or care for. Hence his presence in the hospital. Likewise, it is Baako's incapacity to deal with the outside world that compels him to take refuge in the hospital. As he says, he is feeling shameful and uneasy for having money in his pocket while the rest of the population around is hardly managing to survive: "I feel ashamed that I should have the means to buy things that are not essential to satisfy my tastes, while they (the beggars) have to beg me for the most basic of their needs."(17).

Rejected by the surrounding hostile milieu, the Boucs too have nowhere to go but the caves of Gennevilliers, the caverns of Northern France, and other such places that are both far from inhabited areas and constitute for them a place of refuge. The places where they live are therefore referred to as "taupinières" of "cavernes". They are compared to animals, and when they walk out in the early morning, Waldik says that "l'aube les avait vus surgir de leur taupinière"(Les Boucs, 28, emphasis mine) ["dawn saw them come out of their shack"(Harter, 21)]. Survival for them is therefore linked to the existence of caves, caverns, and other underground places for, as one of them remarks, "Que diable! Il se trouve bien des cavernes dans cette région"(192) ["What the devil! There are caves around here.(Harter, 122)].

As far as Yalann Waldik is concerned, it is only in the bowels of the earth, in the "grandes profondeurs" of the mines of Northern France, that he feels a certain kind of happiness. Despite his being sent in the deepest parts of the mines as a form of punishment or segregation - he did not belong to a union -and despite the fact that he does exhausting tasks and breathes an extremely unhealthy mixture of air, gas, and coal dust, he nevertheless declares that it is there that he feels happy.

> Il se crut sauvé quand il descendit dans les mines. Bonne vieille mère que la Terre dans les entrailles de laquelle, quand il descendit, il s'ensevelit avec quelle paix! Le même jour on s'aperçut qu'il n'était pas syndiqué et on l'expédia dans les "grandes profondeurs," mais il s'y crut encore plus

> sauvé. Il apprit à manier le pic et le wagon, à se mouvoir dans un boyau pour rats, à respirer un mélange de moiteur , de gaz oppressants et de poudre de charbon, mais il était si paisible! C'était exactement ce trou qu'il lui fallait et ce qu'il respirait était exactement ce dont avaient besoin ses bronches.(145).
> [He thought he had found his salvation when he went down into the mines. What a good old mother the Earth was. Down in her innards, he buried himself with such peace! That same day, they found out that he didn't belong to a union and they sent him to the very deepest parts, but he still thought he had been saved. He learned to handle a pick and the wagon, and to move around in a space the size of a rathole, to breathe a mixture of humidity, heavy gas and coal dust, but it was so peaceful! the hole was exactly what he needed and what he was breathing was just right for his lungs.(Harter, 92)]

This craving for an underground and safe universe is unconsciously associated by the narrator with a desire of the return to the mother's womb, to what Jacques Madelain calls "l'espace paradoxal" (Madelain, 1983). The universe of the Underground in the Paris of Topographie could also be read along similar lines. In fact, as long as Said remained underground, he was safe. After all, he was killed only as he was coming up to the open air. There is however a tragical dimension to it as the protagonist has no control over what is happening to him. As Boudjedra has suggested with his reference to a labyrinth in which a Minotaur-like monster was expecting Said, he was heading for certain death.

A similar inexorability prevails upon the characters of Why Are We so Blest? in which Modin Dofu clearly says . . . he has the feeling of taking part in some kind of irreversible ritual designed to transform him and his kind into mere "factors":

> I should have stopped going to lectures long ago. They all form part of a ritual celebrating a tradition called great because it is European, Western, white. The triumphant assumption of a superior community underlies them all, an assumption designed to reduce us to invisibility while magnifying whiteness. My participation in this kind of ritual made me not just lonely, not just one person unsupported by a larger whole, but less than one person: a person split, fractured because of my participation in alien communal rituals designed to break me and my kind.(Why?, 31-2)

In his concept, the scheme that brings these so-called "most unusually intelligent" African students overseas is only a hypocritical ritual that aims at the continuance of the domination of African people. Therefore, he refuses to become one of those "contemptible worms" who are "[h]appy to get degrees, then go home and relax on the shoulders of our sold people" (161). To him, one of the other risks of totally accepting the kind of education

that African students are given abroad is illustrated in the example of Dr Earl Lynch. The latter is an educated Black American who is totally alienated from his original culture. Though he is proud to display an Ananse design in his office he confesses to Modin that, apart from representing an exotic souvenir he bought on a trip to West Africa, its meaning is totally unknown to him. It is in order to avoid this fate that he and his *blasé* American girl-friend Aimée Reitsch decide to do what he calls a "reverse crossing". Although he goes to Afrasia, North Africa, in order to give his life a meaning which he could not achieve in the United States of America, it is clear that he has set foot in another barren area, and it is perhaps symptomatic that Aimée is unable to have with him a satisfactory sexual relationship. In the words of Solo who identifies with the couple, their attempt is doomed to failure: "[w]here he had hoped to go I had already been. I had run back with a spirit broken by too sudden contact with real arrangements, my mind howling for peace, any mediocre peace."(83)

This failure is suggested by the recurrence in the narration of such words as illusion, fate, despair, trap, and also barrenness, sterility and circles. And it is not coincidental that Modin's itinerary takes him to the desert. In his mind the Sahara was meant to constitute, if not a return to the source, a passage to his true self, that is a *traversée*, to borrow the title of a novel by Mouloud Mammeri. (Vatin, 1982). To this place, he is told by one of the locals that there is no road. It is not a road but just a path, a wide path that leads nowhere. Instead of a hospitable place, they find an area where the cold at night is intense and symbolically the mental separation between him and Aimée has grown into a physical one. Instead of representing a return to the origins the Sahara here stands for the ultimate danger for it is shown to be a harmful place. It is here that Modin is taken by French soldiers to be symbolically and cruelly castrated and Aimée raped before his helpless eyes.

The parallels with other novels come to the mind as the itinerary ultimately leads to a dead-end. For instance Said in Topographie is also savagely murdered by a group of racist hooligans as he was about to reach his destination and the Arabs of Les Boucs come to murder the overseer on a construction site in Paris as a result of the murderous awareness Yalann Waldik has aroused in them. As he is told by inseparable friend Raus

> Prophète à taille de pygmée, j'ai à t'apprendre que cette nuit-là ils ont tué. Tué en groupe, posément, comme un seul homme, avec un seul couteau, à la même fraction de seconde. Tué parce qu'ils ont commencé à s'apercevoir que trop lourde était cette âme que tu leur as donnée - ou redonnée -

> insatisfaite, inemployée, et qu'elle les faisait trop souffrir.(Les Boucs, 55)
> ["Prophet of a pigmy's stature, you should know that that night they killed. Killed as group, deliberately, like a single man, with a single knife, at the same fraction of a second. Killed because they began to see that the soul you had given them, unsatisfied, unused, made them suffer too much."(Harter, 36)]

In the words of Raus, he has awakened their souls; he has made them more conscious and this is more harmful for them. Waldik is therefore acting as the healer, the redeemer, or as a kind of prophet. This burden is also interiorized by Waldik who compares himself to Christ, "exactement comme le Christ a porté sa croix... je devais non pas me racheter individuellement... mais racheter les Nord Africains. Pour eux souffrir dans ma dignité d'homme et dans ma chair d'homme"(70-71) ["just as Christ carried his cross... my responsibility was not to redeem myself... *but that I must redeem the North Africans*. Suffer for them in my dignity as a man and in my flesh as a man.(Harter, 45-6)]. Choosing, as he says, to suffer in his flesh and soul, to experience the misery of his own countrymen, Waldik undergoes an almost mystical experience. At the beginning there was total incomprehension between him and the Boucs. "Waldik était pour eux un Chrétien. Il tenta de leur expliquer pourquoi il voulait étaler leurs misères à tous sous la forme d'un livre.... Il y en eut un qui haussa les épaules... Ils ne dirent même pas leur dignité de parias blessés... (et) continuèrent de le traiter en Chrétien"(159, emphasis mine) ["To them Waldik was a Christian. He tried... to explain to them why he wanted to expose their miseries in the form of a book.... One of them shrugged his shoulders.... They said nothing about their dignity as wounded pariahs... and went right on treating him like a Christian"(Harter, 101)]. The "Christian" he was at the beginning becomes a prophet and a saint: "Il s'était laissé pousser la barbe- *tel un saint*, devait-il penser; *tel un clochard*, pensa-t-elle.(176, italics in the text) ["He had let his beard grow: *just like a saint*, he must have thought; *just like a tramp*, she thought."(Harter, 113)]. As it is suggested by the antinomic pair saint/tramp the difference between reason and madness is very tenuous and Waldik gradually admits his madness. As he says: "je savais que de cette nuit-là date ma folie"(Boucs,35). In the same passage, it is Raus who tells him that he is mad: "Raus était rentré... puis il était reparti en parlant de fous et de folie"(35) ["I know with complete clarity... that on that night my madness had begun"... "Rauss had come in...and had then gone away mumbling about crazy people and insanity"(Harter, 25)].

In playing the role of the spokesman of the Arabs Yalann Waldik is doing his own search for the truth and awakening his compatriots. However this enterprise is more like the crossing of a desert for him. As he admits, "Je ne me crois pas représentant de qui ou de quoi que ce soit, hormis de moi. Ceux-là même qui m'aiment - Raus et les Boucs - m'ont toujours considéré comme un étranger"(97) ["I do not see myself as the representative of any person or thing whatsoever, except myself. Even those who love me - Rauss and the Butts - have always considered me a stranger, a case apart." (Harter, 61)]. While trying to awaken their consciences, he has only managed to arouse the violence that was latent in them, without succeeding in getting the message through: "J'essayais de traduire comme l'auraient fait les Boucs. Même traduit en Kabyle ou en vérités simples, cet exposé de leurs misères les eût noyés.... Moi, je pouvais faire la part du doute, du factoriel et du transcendant parce que, comment dirais-je? je comprends le français."(37) ["I was trying to translate into Arabic, as the Butts would do. Even translated into the dialect of Algeria's Kabyle, such an explanation of their miserable existence would have overwhelmed them.... As for me, I could play the role of questioner, factorial and transcendent because - how shall I express it? - I do understand French..." (Harter, 26)]

This prophet figure is further reinforced by the repeated use of the word wind in the narration. In the particular Maghrebine cultural context, wind is often associated with two things. It is attributed a purifying power and is thus perceived as the wind of change with its promises of *tabula rasa* and of a new life. This is very close to the purifying action of fire. It is also associated with madness, momentary madness but also with something more beneficial. There is however no evidence in Les Boucs to determine whether Driss Chraibi leaves room for hope or not. Instead of limiting his description to the condition of North Africans alone, he wishes to broaden the view in order to include all the "wretched of the earth" for, as he writes

> de tout temps, en tout lieu, il y avait toujours eu un lot d'hommes - et non seulement les Nord Africains en France - promus au sacrifice: Nègres en Amérique, Juifs dans le Proch-Orient, Musulmans de l'Inde, esclaves de l'ancienne Rome ou de la Grèce antique... inadaptés à une civilisation quelle qu'elle fut, comme pour prouver qu'aucune création de l'homme n'a jamais été parfaite.(189-90)[9]
>
> ["in all times and in all places there had always been men - whose fate it was to be sacrificial victims, whether the Negro in America, the Jew in the Middle East, the Moslem in India, the slaves of ancient Rome or Greece, unassimilated into a civilization, as though to prove that no creation of man has

ever been for everyone or ever been perfect"(Harter, 120)]

There are also many madmen in the universe of the novels of Ayi Kwei Armah and Rachid Boudjedra. It is not only a contingency madness which is represented in these works. Most of the time, it is associated with the hero's going through a shocking experience: the stay overseas, the experience of war... A common characteristic of all these madmen is that they are all concerned with the preservation of traditional values as well as a search for truth in a world the values of which are totally upset. Yalann Waldik was searching for his own truth in order to reveal the plight of the Arabs in France. The Man and the Teacher of The Beautyful Ones are confronted with post-war and post-independence disenchantment and are searching for a solid ground, in an environment that has been invaded by materialistic values, the newly-erected gods the modern Ghanaians are shown to worship in Fragments.

MADMEN

Adhiambo

I hear many voices
Like it's said a madman hears
I hear trees talking
Like it's said a medicine-man hears.

Maybe I'm a madman,
Maybe I'm a medicine-man.

Maybe I'm a madman
for the voices are luring me,
Urging me from midnight
noon and the silence of my desk
to walk on wave crest across the sea.

Gabriel Okara in
Gerald Moore & Ulli Beier eds
Modern Poetry from Africa, p. 16

So far, this study has dealt with four examples of veterans in Armah's novels: Juana, Ocran, Teacher, and the invalid. Though all their troubles originate from a state of incompatibility with their milieu, they belong to different types of alienated heroes. In the words of Femi Ojo-Ade (1979), Juana represents the 'sane' stranger who, despite the overwhelming pressures of her situation, stays on 'the right side of the fence'. Ocran and the invalid stand for the intermediary cases, whereas Teacher, or his friend Home-Boy and more precisely Baako, are the one who goes overboard, the one for whom it is impossible to adjust to the existing social practice.

While Teacher explains the origin of his disillusionment, he refers to himself as to a thinking mind that is subject to an "inward sickness of the individual soul [provoked by] a kind of movement that should make even good stomachs go sick"(The Beautyful Ones, 62). A pain he says that is provoked by the unnatural aspect of the change. Starting with what he refers to as "the beauty of the first days" during which there was encouraging growth, he says it is followed by a progressive movement away from the beauty of the first days leading to a quick decay and the betrayal of long-sustained ideals.

The rapid decay he has witnessed has begun with the return of Ghanaian soldiers from the war. They were sent to Burma to fight another people's war. As Teacher reports, the average soldier was "called to show his manhood fighting in alien lands and leaving his women behind with the demented and the old and the children and the other women"(64). Not only had they had to

survive this first shock, but on top of that, on their return to Ghana, they found a society in which deep economic, social, and political changes were taking place. Therefore

> [a] lot found it impossible to survive the destruction of the world they had carried away with them in their departing heads, and so they went simply mad, like Home Boy... Home Boy, endlessly repeating harsh , unintelligible words of command he had never understood but he had learned to obey in other people's countries, marching all the day, everywhere, and driving himself to his insane exhaustion with the repetition of all the military drill he had learned, always to the proud accompaniment of his own scout whistle with its still-shiny metal sound (65)[10].

In their search for a "comforting darkness of the memory," people, when they did not become mad, took to drinking, before changing to "wee," i.e. marijuana. For them it was the only escape route:

> Many things happened then which we ourselves had no way of understanding. Strangers, our own people who had gone as seamen to the West Indies, came back wearing only calico and their beards, talking openly of the white man's cruelty. We all said they were mad, of course, but if you stood with one of them and listened to his words without too much fear, toward the end it would become very hard for you to tell on which point exactly the man was mad.(76)

The same remarks also apply to the madman in L'Aventure Ambiguë who has taken part in the second world war and is still under its shock when he goes back to Senegal wearing his military coat under his traditional boubou.

The previous examples show that madness is not the exclusive territory of the learned. It also originates from the violence of the war in which less educated people took part. This can be read in L'Aventure Ambiguë with the character of the madman, with Home Boy in The Beautyful Ones, Abotsi (the Burma veteran, among others) in Awoonor's This Earth, My Brother... and also in Boudjedra's novels among other examples in African fiction.

In a discussion of what he calls a "state of man's incompatibility with his milieu," Femi Ojo-Ade admits that "sanity does not constitute a theme of mere artistic interest to the African novelist" (134). In this connection he writes

> The African novel ... has depicted two types of alienated heroes: the one who has managed, in spite of the overwhelming pressures of his situation to stay on what could be termed 'the right side of the fence'; that is he does not belong to the mainstream of the social order, he is a 'stranger' albeit a 'sane' stranger. On the other hand there is the hero who goes overboard, so to speak. Finding it totally impossible to adjust to the inhuman situation existing in his society, not satisfied with mere utterances of protest or with a fairly 'sane' life on the fringe of society, he pushes himself

> mentally to the limit, and even beyond it, and finally reaches a point where society ostracizes him and deems it fit to put him away in a madhouse. (Ojo-Ade, 1979, 134).

The alienated figures under scrutiny will be seen through a comparison of L'Aventure Ambiguë and Fragments. Ayi Kwei Armah and Cheikh Hamidou Kane are both examples of Africans of a certain intellectual capacity who have had a first hand knowledge of the West, respectively America and France, during their studies abroad. Both of them feel deeply involved in the future of their own societies and provide a personal interpretation of the position of the African intellectual returned home. The juxtaposition of their novels aims at providing not only examples from both Anglophone and Francophone Africa, but also stands as a symbol for the fact that the theme of the outsider/madman is a theme common to many African writers, including North African novelists of French expression as will be shown later in the novels of Rachid Boudjedra.

The madmen represented by Kane and Armah share the following characteristics. First they appear in times of crisis, that is when times are out of joint; then they are not complete outsiders but act as the keepers of the traditions, or missionaries, and they are the only ones who know when no one else sees clear. Kane and Armah are therefore not describing the world of madness but the madness of the world. They condemn the surrounding society which is capable of giving birth to similar plagues. Our purpose here is to trace in the novels the origin of the heroes' madness, its manifestations, and finally its significance and function.

In Fragments, Baako is the hero who becomes mad and because of many incompatibilities. He is a 'been-to' returned home . He wants to be a maker and use his job as television script writer to create. In so doing he goes against the general admitted behaviour and has very few allies. He does not want to act as a mere provider to his family's material needs. In this respect his arrival at Accra airport with a typewriter and guitar for only luggage is contrasted to that of another Ghanaian 'been-to', H.R.H. Brempong, who brings wealth and material goods to friends and relatives. Brempong is welcomed as a modern hero whereas Baako is much like an anti-hero. He questions the beliefs of his family. He is aware of their needs but he is not ready, as he says, to bring wealth at the expense of the community, of his own society.

His preoccupation with keeping the traditions is shared by a few allies such as his old teacher Ocran, his Puerto-Rican mistress Juana, and his blind grandmother Naana, to whom the new values mean nothing. It is these same allies who help him in his fight for sanity. However they are quickly

outnumbered by the worshippers of the cargo cult for whom material wealth is more important than any spiritual quest. It is this pressure and a gradual awareness of a deep incompatibility which drive him mad.

The culminating point of Baako's madness is the expression of the cargo-cult mentality in which his ability to see clear and deep helps him identify the source of evil. In what the others qualify as a fit of madness, he gives a formulation of the mechanism of the cargo-cult:

> Two distinct worlds, one here, one out there, one known, the other unknown except in legend and dream.... The main export to the other world is people. The true dead going back to the ancestors, the ritual dead.... At any rate it is clearly understood that the been-to has chosen, been awarded, a certain kind of death. A beneficial death, since cargo follows his return.... the human being once dead is in his burial considered as having been exported to the other world. A return is expected from his presence there: he will intercede on behalf of those not yet dead, asking for them what they need most urgently.... Needs dictated by instant survival and subsistence requirements.... In many ways the been-to cum ghost is and has to be a transmission belt for cargo. Not a maker, but an intermediary." (Fragments, 156-7)

Baako is in turn the detached physician who observes his society from a distance, the missionary preaching in a hostile environment, and finally the sacrificed hero who accepts his being spiritually murdered so that the remaining ones might be saved.

Madman, wise man, redeemer, and missionary are types that can also be identified in L'Aventure Ambiguë in which the madman is a member of the Diallobé people who went to France and probably took part in the second World War. But it is not his contact with the West but a foreseen incompatibilty between Western and African values which causes his madness. His sickness originates in his being transplanted into an alien and hostile environment where the values he symbolizes are negated. The madman's story is a condensed form of Samba Diallo's experience as a philosophy student in France.

His spiritual itinerary shows how he unsuccessfully tries to reconcile the spirituality of his traditional Muslim world with the materialistic European world. The novel is the expression of his failure. This failure however has been anticipated by the madman. The latter's unheroic return is perhaps less unsuccessful because the madman is later seen as the keeper of the traditions, the only clear and deep-sighted one whose madness constitutes a prophecy.

The madman himself describes his illness as originating from his own personal contact with the West. His extreme sensitivity enables him to foresee the deep incompatibility and dichotomy of the two worlds, the human world being invaded by the mechanical one. He feels this incompatibilty in his body, and it is rendered into groups of antinomic words: 'dure', 'glacé', 'mécanique', 'chaos', which are opposed to 'mou', 'chaud', 'humain', and 'ordre'. This is rendered in the description of the staircase balustrade in The Beautyful Ones, a contingency sickness which Roquentin also experiences in Jean-Paul Sartre's La Nausée. He symbolically feels sick when he arrives in France. Sickness originates from his being transplanted into an alien and hostile environment in which the values he stands for are meaningless and destroyed.

Baako's sickness is provoked by a "fear of the return" because he knows that "the member of the family who goes out and comes back is a sort of charmed man , a miracle worker. He goes, he comes back, and with his return some astounding and sudden change is expected" (Fragments, 103). He feels that the family sees in him only the "hero [who] comes and turns its poverty into sudden wealth"(103). He is told by Juana that "going against a general current" is a very lonely and frustrating experience, and that one should not "tie [your] happiness too closely to what happens, what other people do or say"(129).

His old teacher is the first one to identify the causes of his sickness in these words: "the relatives... I suppose you're right, not blaming them for wanting things. But it's senseless to get sick because you can't help them get what they want... You're just someone they'd like to use to get what they want" (192-3).

It is the others who drive him mad and respond to his creative ideas by telling him he is wasting their time. But the family and the others assimilate his madness with an excess of knowledge.

In general terms it can be said that Baako's sickness comes from the gap between his ideals and his family's expectations. The latter are formulated thus: "the return of this one traveler has held out so much of good hope. But there were those left behind who had dreams and put them on the shoulders of the traveler returned, heavy dreams and hopes" (Fragments, 198)

Similar hopes and expectations are also the burden put by the Diallobé on Samba's shoulders. He is equally regarded as a kind of miracle worker who would come back and teach his people the secret of the white man's supremacy. His aunt expects him to turn the defeat of the Diallobé into a victory. However he does not succeed and he is killed by the madman, not

because of his having failed, but because he perhaps represented another menace to the order of the Diallobé.

The role of the madman remains mysterious until the last chapter of the novel. He is presented under curious traits. His portrait insists on his peculiar physical appearance and his narration is so extravagant that no one believes him. Symbolically, Samba Diallo is the first one to confirm the madman's narration. Samba Diallo and Thierno are the only persons who understand him. Moreover the madman is given as much importance as Thierno. If the Diallobé listen to Thierno and come to him for advice, Thierno in turn is shown to listen to the madman. The madman becomes the one who knows better. He is in total communion with Thierno because they are the unique seers of the Diallobé. When the madman warns the Diallobé of the imminent chaos, he acts a prophet who announces the coming metamorphosis which starts with the death of the teacher and he is seen as the man who knew a secret that was evil to the world.

Thierno and Samba Diallo, by listening to the madman and being guided by him, rehabilitate him to his sanity. He is no longer an outsider, not only for the accuracy of his prophecy, but also for his behaviour at the deathbed of Thierno: "Aucune personne de l'assistance, pas même le chef des Diallobé, accroupi contre le maitre et plongé dans la prière, n'osait intervenir pour écarter le fou. "(L'Aventure, 181) ["No person of the assemblage, not even the chief of the Diallobé, who was crouched close against the teacher and lost in prayer, would have dared to push the fool aside"(Woods, 168)]

There is a gradual shift in the roles between Samba and the madman. It is the former who now talks nonsense and the latter who thinks and reasons and who finally kills Samba, not only because the latter does not want to pray, but also to oppose the manifestation of evil forces and save the traditional values of the Diallobé.

The conservation of traditional values and authenticity is also the preoccupation of the madman in Fragments. And it is because they are menaced that Baako feels this sickness. Nausea and fever are the first symptoms of his madness. These are often associated with words like frustration, disappointment, meaninglessness, absurdity, sterility, barrenness, anger, unhappiness, and hopelessness. The seat of his madness is often the stomach. As his grandmother Naana says, "always and everywhere the same words that bring a sickness to the stomach of the listener."(Fragments, 98)

It is perhaps a symptom that the only persons with whom Baako communicates are, as we have seen earlier, his teacher Ocran, his mistress Juana, and his blind grandmother Naana. These three characters represent

those for whom the "newly-erected gods" mean nothing. Ocran is the former teacher who is upset by the changes but who is unable to fight them. Juana is the Puerto-Rican psychiatrist who sees the mad ones from without. And Naana is the grandmother become blind because she can no longer stand the general disrespect for the old ways.

The general significance of the representation of madness is perhaps to be found in the special treatment of the theme of death. Fragments makes reference to three occurrences of death - Skido, the lorry-driver is killed while trying to get on the ferry-boat with his loaded lorry; the new-born baby of Baako's sister Araba is killed by his family 's action in setting the outdooring ceremony too early; again the rabid dog is killed by a man "with the swollen scrotum" to put an end to his own "poisoned masculinity". The lorry-driver, the baby and the dog represent three victims sacrificed to the "newly-erected gods". The outdooring ceremony is arranged by Baako's mother Efua to match the civil servants' pay-day in order to collect more money. The man who killed the supposedly rabid dog did so in order to regain his lost masculinity, whereas Skido's death is presented as something routine-like and necessary for the continuation of the ferry-boat shuttle. The ferry-boat itself is the symbol of the cargo-cult mentality for it is the carrier of material goods.

Baako's spiritual death seems to fulfil the same function. He is marginalized because the others think that because his return has not brought the expected goods, it is a failure. In this respect he certainly represents the anti-hero symbolically sacrificed by being locked into a mental hospital.

Although the latter yields to the social pressure and concedes that the others, the family had a right to their expectations, our reading of the novel sees a kind of a catharsis in his spiritual death. As he himself formulates it in a trance,

> it is clearly understood that the been-to has chosen, been awarded a certain kind of death. A beneficial death, since cargo follows his return. Not just cargo, but also importance, power, a radiating influence capable of touching ergo elevating all those who in the first instance have suffered the special bereavement of the been-to's going away. (Fragments, 157)

He dies because it is clear that the others see in him "not a maker but an intermediary," a mere transmission belt for cargo. His sickness and death are also provoked by the distortion of old myths , like the theme of the voyage abroad, very much like the voyage of Ulysses and his return to Ithaca:

> The voyage abroad, everything that follows; it's very much a colonial thing. But the idea itself is something very old. It's the myth of the extraordinary man who brings about a complete turnabout in terrible circumstances. We have the old heroes who turned defeat into victory for the whole community. But these days, the community has disappeared from the story. Instead there is the family, and the hero who comes and turns its poverty into wealth. And the external enemy isn't the one at whose expense the hero sets his victory; he's supposed to get rich, mainly at the expense of the community. (Fragments, 103)

The myths as they originally exist are good, says Baako, but their modern use is not satisfactory. Therefore, we see that instead of the original creative hero, society has invented a new hero whose function is to bring cargo and material wealth only. This is precisely where Baako rejects a dominant practice and acts as the anti-hero. However it seems that his spiritual death is not totally useless. It is both a catharsis and a beneficial death. Baako seems to give up and accepts his defeat. He is willing to die so that those to come will be redeemed.

A reading of Rachid Boudjedra's novels also highlights the presence of a series of unsuccessful figures, sick heroes, and madmen who are presented as outsiders and for whom the only way out is a catharsis to be achieved after they have faced the deepest forms of disgust and sickness. Rachid and Zahir of La Répudiation for instance do not achieve much, whereas the central figure of L'Insolation, Mehdi, is in a psychiatric hospital. The peasant of Topographie is killed before he reaches his destination, and the bureaucrat of L'Escargot Entêté gives up and surrenders.

All these heroes appear to be sick. Some of them are clearly said to be mad, like Rachid, the "Devin," and Mehdi. Their madness originates in the upsetting of original values. They are shown to be like the 'Devin' or Djoha, close to the traditions and it is therefore difficult to say whether they can be seen as being total outsiders or real insiders. The "Devin" of La Répudiation, like Djoha (see note 1) in L'Insolation, represent popular characters who are known for their common sense. As underlined by Rachid Boudjedra, "Djoha, c'est le personnage mi-naif, mi-génial qui exprime le bon-sens populaire... Djoha est un personnage extrêmement libre" (Bouraoui, 1979, 167) [Djoha is the half naive, half genius character who represents popular wisdom... Djoha is an extremely free character.] Djoha is therefore the expression of a political stand. Like the "Devin" he directs his indictment at the group in power. However he is not a total outsider. This kind of political criticism and commitment is a form of patriotism. As

Rachid Boudjedra stated it, Algeria as a country deserves far better than what it has now.

Rachid's madness therefore is provoked by the social evils he is unable to fight: religious bigotry and hypocrisy, the alliance between the group in power, the "Clan" and the reactionary forces represented by his father Si Zoubir, the segregation of women .... But above all he is interned because of his friendship with the "Devin". The latter, although referred to as "un bandit échappé à la légalité" [a bandit escaped from the law], is the only clear-sighted character of La Répudiation. He is killed by the Secret Members of the Clan because he knew a secret; according to him the revolution has been betrayed and diverted from its legitimate course. Instead of profiting the masses who have consented to sacrifices during the war, it is made to serve the needs of the Clan which uses religion and 'the power of the word' to keep the masses quiet.

At the origin of his 'madness' and his being locked up is also the incestuous relationship Rachid has with his young stepmother Zoubida. Although this is meant as a symbol for his revolt against the repudiation of Ma, it also stands for a revolt against the oppressors who have repudiated the revolution. He is later taken to prison because he was a friend of the 'Devin', "tué à bout portant parce qu'il lisait Marx" (La Répudiation, 213). Of this 'Devin' who always remains anonymous, we do not know much; the reader is not even sure of his death. He is described as the enemy of the Clan and we are told that, like the madman in L'Aventure Ambiguë, he knew a secret which was baleful to the world, to the Membres Secrets du Clan:

> C'était la raison pour laquelle ils avaient tué le Devin en lui tirant dans le dos: il s'intéressait trop à l'avenir et pas assez au présent; en outre ses prophéties leur faisaient peur car elles étaient terribles: ne leur prédisait-il pas un avenir où la terreur dirigée contre le peuple serait le trait dominant d'une politique hautement démagogique, fondée sur la richesse du verbe et la construction de mosquées où les masses viendraient oublier leurs revendications? (La Répudiation, 214-215)
>
> ["It was for this reason that they killed the 'Seer' by shooting him in the back: he was too much concerned with the future and not enough with the present; moreover, they were scared by his terrible prophecies: did he not foresee a future when the terror directed against the people would be the dominant feature of a highly demagogic policy, based on the construction of mosques where the masses would come to forget their grievances"]

This awareness in Rachid leads to his arrest by the Secret Members of the Clan. However there is in the novel a constant shift in the description, from the setting of a hospital to a prison universe. Rachid himself is not certain of the nature of the place; although at one moment he says: "j'avais pleinement conscience d'avoir fait la navette entre le Clan et le bagne, puis entre le bagne et l'hopital" (La Répudiation, 213) ["I was fully aware that I was taken from the Clan to the gaol, and from the gaol to the hospital."], he acknowledges a page earlier that he may only have imagined it all: "je me mis à délirer, prenant la villa pour un hôpital psychiatrique et mes interrogateurs pour des aliénistes éminents dont j'avais lu les noms dans quelque revue spécialisée." (La Répudiation, 268) ["I became feverish, mistaking the villa for a psychiatric hospital, and my investigators for renowned consultants whose names I had read in some specialized periodical."]

This is the difference between an idealized country and the reality that distresses and makes sick the characters of the novels. And this is why most of them are "disordered". But, instead of accepting these "defects" the heroes of Boudjedra fight back and strive to regain a lost paradise, an ideal state of things. As Hédi Bouraoui writes, "ce manque d'équilibre sur le plan physique reflète non seulement certaines carences sur le plan psychologique mais aussi une tentative des personnages de retrouver l'équilibre métaphysique"(Bouraoui, 1979, 168). One of the ways in which Boudjedra tries to reach this metaphysical balance is through the presentation of outsiders. Among the latter he draws the picture of a certain kind of *aède* sometimes called "le Devin" who is identical to the traditional figure of Djoha. In so doing he not only recommends a return to his maghrebine origins, but he inserts his outsiders into a local cultural heritage. Therefore it difficult to say whether the outsiders depicted in his novels are rejected by or integrated within their native social and cultural environment.

It is also noticed that there is in Boudjedra a recurrence of the theme of confinement (confiners/confined), and the characters that are locked up are the deviant ones. At the origin of Rachid's being locked away, and his subsequent madness, is his incestuous relationship with his father's new bride Zoubida. While he is locked away in a hospital/prison or prison/hospital, or simply in the house, he is unable to tell where he really is. There in his mind a total confusion. The characters he meets therefore take the colours of a confined universe. This is why in the eyes of Rachid, Yasmina's mother-in-law becomes a "surveillante dans un asile d'aliénés [qui] décela tout de suite une tendance à la sorcellerie, la

considéra comme une malade et ne lui parla que vêtue d'une blouse blanche et coiffée d'un bonnet d'infirmière"(La Répudiation, 157) ["matron in a lunatic asylum (who) immediately detected in her a tendency to witchcraft, and thereafter considered her as a sick person and made sure that she was wearing her nurse's white overall and bonnet whenever she addressed her."]. For Rachid himself there is a doubt as to whether he is sane or not:

> Etais-je sain d'esprit? (le psychologue qui me testait savait-il que je l'endoctrinais pertinemment?). Non! Car les Membres n'y étaient pas allés de main morte durant mon incarcération dans la villa et je gardais, par suite de la fêlure d'un os crânien, des signes évidents de déséquilibre, accentués par cette confusion totale qui malmenait quotidiennement ma certitude. Etais-je réellement dans un hopital? Je n'en savais rien: j'avais autant de preuves pour répondre par l'affirmative que pour répondre par la négative; en outre, je soupçonnais le Clan de m'avoir enfermé, avec l'accord de mon père, dans le bagne de Lambèse, en même temps qu'un grand nombre de détenus politiques qui y moisissaient depuis de longues années, sans jamais avoir été jugés ni même informés des charges retenues contre eux. (La Répudiation, 160)
>
> ["Was I sound of mind? (did the psychologist who was testing me know that I was in fact indoctrinating him?). No. As the Members had been rather heavy-handed during my incarceration in the villa, I showed, following a crack in my skull, obvious signs of disorder which were intensified by this total confusion which shook my certitude every day. Was I really in a hospital? I did not know: I had as much evidence to answer in the affirmative as in the negative; besides, I suspected the Clan had locked me up with my father's consent, in the Lambèze penal colony, along with other political prisoners who had been rotting there for years, without having ever been judged and without any charges against them."]

This is why he decides to accept his confinement: "il ne me restait plus qu'une solution: éviter la susceptibilité des Membres Secrets, me faire oublier dans un quelconque hôpital et y attendre la réalisation de la prophétie du Devin: la faillite du Clan..." (La Répudiation, 275) ["I was left with only one solution: to avoid the susceptibility of the Secret Members of the Clan, hide myself to be forgotten in any asylum and there, wait for the prophecy of the Seer to come true: the failure of the Clan..."].

This description provides the reader with two categories of characters: on the one hand those who are locked up, the confined, like Ma, Zoubida, and women in general, Rachid and the supposedly mad ones, and on the other, the confiners, i.e. those who shut them up, like the Secret Members of the Clan, Si Zoubir, ... The narration is therefore referring to the universe of a hospital or prison. Rachid is equally conscious that the others see in him a

madman for as he says, "n'étais-je pas, à leurs yeux, un malade mental, en rapport avec des forces occultes, dangereuses pour tous ceux qui s'exposeraient à ma colère?" (La Répudiation, 200) ["was I not a madman who, in their eyes, had connections with dark forces, so baleful to all those who provoked my wrath?"]. Except for his father Si Zoubir, the others, the oppressors, remain the Secret Members of the Clan and are anonymous and undefined.

During his stay in the psychiatric hospital, Rachid does not give any description of the universe of madness. He seems to be more concerned with its causes as enumerated earlier and its outcome and meaning. This is why the madman/Rachid becomes like the 'Devin', aware of his being given a mission which was to "organiser la lutte révolutionnaire chez les malades mentaux [...] mener à bien cette mission que personne ne m'avait confiée mais que le jugeais primordiale pour l'exigeante formulation de la révolution permanente."(La Répudiation, 277) ["to organize the revolutionary fight among the madmen ... to fulfil this mission I was given by nobody but which I deemed fundamental to the demanding formulation of continuous revolution."]

His stay in the hospital, which for the others is the proof of his madness, becomes to him a pretext. He clearly says that he knows he is not mad: "mes compagnons, dans les autres cachots, savent que je ne suis pas éternellement voué au délire"(La Répudiation, 293) ["my mates in the other cells know that I am not forever subject to delirium"]. This corresponds to what Boudjedra calls "la substantifique folie". Like the "substantifique moëlle" in Rabelais' writing, it is meant to be beneficial. It is according to Boudjedra, a form of controlled delirium which has the function of a catharsis. As he says "[c]ertains de mes personnages sont traumatisés, malades. L'écriture est une tentative de guérison. Le rêve nous libère."(Bott, 1970, 11)

ARTIFICIAL STRUCTURES

Various critics have seen in Boudjedra's novels, Topographie in particular, an exercise in style which shows the author's varied sources of inspiration and analogies between this novel and European/French novels of "Le Nouveau Roman" (Hamel, 1975). Organized into five chapters, and reproducing the five train lines followed by the peasant in the underground of Paris, it uses the technique of "literary mathematics". This device, which consists in following the patterns of artificially organized figures, is a common practice since Samuel Beckett. It is to be found again in several other novels which may have inspired Rachid Boudjedra. The gradations of the Beaufort scale gave Derek Robinson the structure of his Goshawk Squadron. The configuration of the tarot cards was used in Jean Demélier's Le Rêve de Job whereas Michel Butor's La Modification was made to coincide in structure with a railway trip. Charles Bonn also underlines in this respect the similarity between Topographie and the following novels by Alain Robbe-Grillet, Topologie d'une Cité Fantôme and Dans le Labyrinthe.

The title of Boudjedra's novel is abstract and theoretical. Vatin who underlines its highly sophisticated character writes:

> Le titre mérite décriptage, élucidation mot par mot.... L'approche du sujet comme la manière d'en traiter ne permettent guère de classer le roman dans les séries ordinaires et faciles... C'est un assemblage de termes destinés à retenir le lecteur, l'obliger à s'interroger, éviter à tout le moins qu'il ne se jette dans le roman sans y regarder d'un peu plus près, qu'il ne consomme le livre sans un début de réflexion. (Vatin, 1976a, 70-71)
>
> [The title needs decoding, elucidation word by word. Because of the way the topic is approached and handled, the novel cannot be classified according to the ordinary and easy categories... It is a combination of terms which aims at catching the reader, forces him to start thinking, and at least prevents him from reading the novel only superficially, from devouring the book without some preliminary thinking.]

In the words of the author it is a "fantasmagorie spatio-littéraire" (76) in which the narration is unconventional. The events are not presented in a chronological order; they follow the order of memory. Moreover the plot is presented from several points of view. As soon as the reader starts following the peasant in his underground peregrinations, he is disturbed by the interference of the police inquiry, told by another narrator, without any warning or punctuation. The testimonies of witnesses are also introduced without any transition, as are the reflexions of the laskars, excerpts from newspapers, texts of advertisements.... There is a constant shift from one

point of view to the other, from one place to another, from the underground world to the "Piton".

According to the novelist, the modern form of his novels, their "structure complexe," is owed to an Arab influence:

> elle existait déjà depuis longtemps dans la littérature arabe du patrimoine.... il ne s'agit donc pas d'un transfert, d'un mimétisme occidental, mais d'une résurgence de l'esthétique arabo-islamique qui est une esthétique du labyrinthe, de l'emboîtement, de la structure complexe.(Revil, 1987, 5)
> [this composite structure is something that, for ages, had been in use in the heritage of Arab literature... It is therefore neither a transfer, nor an imitation of a Western technique, but the resurgence of an Arab-Muslim aesthetic which is an aesthetic of the labyrinth, of nests of boxes, of intricate structure.]

What is here called complex structure would perhaps be more accurately described as non linear narrative as in Les Boucs. This, as Kadra-Hadjadji writes, "trouve sa pleine justification dans a psychologie du héros, personnage passif, enfermé dans ses pensées, se rêves, ses souvenirs lointains ou récents, ruminant sa jalousie et sa haine."(Kadra-Hadjadji, 1986, 74). One aspect of the hero's psychology that I think is important is a certain introspection - the hero looking back at what is now a complete failure - that develops the feeling of being caught in irreversible mechanisms.

The assumption is that the more of an outsider the hero feels he is, the more tormented the structure of his thoughts, of the stream of consciousness, therefore the more artificial the structure of the narrative. This assumption will be tested in three novels: No Longer At Ease, Les Boucs, and Going Down River Road.

No Longer At Ease is a novel which deals with the hero's formative years and one would expect it, like Camara Laye's L'Enfant Noir, to develop along chronological lines, starting from the early days of the focal character until his return. However the structure of No Longer at Ease is not quite similar to that of L'Enfant Noir, and at the same time not yet identical to the tormented narration that is to be found in Les Boucs.

It is rather a retrospective as the narration starts in April or May 1958, as Obi has been arrested and is due to appear in court under the charge of having accepted a twenty pounds bribe from a stranger. But the narration next steps backwards in time to evoke Obi's childhood, the days before his departure, his return, and the period he spent working for the

Scholarship Board until his arrest. However, in order to show the way the narrative structure is organized in No Longer at Ease, let us present the main events which will be dated whenever evidence from the text allows to do so.

I, pp.1-7: Obi is said to be in court some three or four weeks after his arrest, for he refers to its proceedings under the chairmanship of "Mr Justice William Galloway, Judge of the High Court of Lagos and the Southern Cameroons".

I, p.7: the narrator takes us backwards, up to "six or seven years ago," period of the founding of the Umuofia Progressive Union which decided that "the first scholarship... was (to be) awarded to Obi Okonkwo five years ago, almost to the day".

I, p.8: the next event to be reported is the departure ceremony announced by the indication "a few days before his departure ... Obi's going to England caused a big stir in Umuofia".

II, p.13:"Obi was away in England for a little under four years... But the Nigeria he returned to was in many ways different from the picture he had carried in his mind during those four years".

Although the first two paragraphs are apparently devoted to the early days of Obi's return to Nigeria,with paragraph 3 as an insert about his childhood, the following nine paragraphs deal with the few days he spent in Lagos with his friend Joseph before going to England (from p.14 to 15): "For many years afterwards... after he had at last visited the city and spent a few days there before flying to the United Kingdom"(p.14). His passage in Lagos is recalled in these terms: "Joseph was at Lagos Motor Park to meet his lucky friend who was passing through Lagos to the United Kingdom"(p.14).

II, pp.16-21: the remaining part of the chapter is situated in time by the expression "Some years later as Obi, newly returned from England..."(p. 16).

III + IV: it is said to take place on the cargo-boat, the *MV Sasa*, heading towards the port of Lagos. Speaking about Clara whom he "met at a dance organized by the London branch of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons at the St Pancras Town Hall"(p.22), he underlines that "they did not meet again until almost eighteen months later at the Harrington Dock in Liverpool. For it happened that they were returning to Nigeria the same day on the same boat"(p.22).

The journey lasts four days and they arrive on "a hot October day" (October 1956, cf IV, p.30), and Obi is given a royal welcome at the reception organized by the Umuofia Progressive Union.

V to IX: He sits in an interview for a job and goes home to Umuofia to

wait for the result. He eventually gets the job and starts working with the Scholarship Board in the service of Mr. Green. This takes us to chapter IX, p.85 where Obi notes that he has been back "six months now".

X, p.99: his "electricity bill for November" is mentioned and another date is supplied in

XI, p.106 where Obi analyses the behaviour of his boss, Mr Green: "In 1900, Mr. Green might have been ranked among the great missionaries; in 1935 he would have made do with slapping headmasters in the presence of their pupils, but in 1957, (i.e. now, time of the narration) he could only curse and swear".

XII, p.115: the year after, that is in January 1958, he mentions that "After Christmas (he) got a letter from his father to say that his mother was again ill in hospital..."

XII, p.123: as a consequence he "was granted two weeks local leave from 10th to 24th February (1958)".

XIV-XVI: these three chapters correspond to the dates of his leave for, in chapter XVII, he is back to work after Clara has had an abortion.

XVIII, p.158 probably covers the period of April 1958 for it is said that "Clara was in hospital for five weeks".

XIX, p.167: this finally takes the narration to some period in end of April or May 1958 "the season for scholarships," and the moment he was caught at his flat with the twenty pounds bribe in his pocket, and later, after some three or four weeks, tried at court:

I, p.1: "for three or four weeks, Obi Okonkwo had been steeling himself against this moment".

The point is to prove that despite the chronological development that is followed from chapter II, p.16, to chapter XIX, the striking element is that chapter I starts where chapter XIX stops, thus creating the feeling of some kind of circularity. Not a circle as a harmonious whole, but as an imprisoning figure, from which there is no way out. The idea of the hero being trapped is confirmed by earlier references to a hopeless tragedy happening in a place as dark as the car park in chapter II, or the "Palm Grove" restaurant described in chapter IV. This circularity is once again substantiated by the feeling that the tragedy lived by Obi's grandfather (see Okonkwo in No Longer at Ease) is bound to affect his descendency again and again. A similar circularity is again suggested by the structure of Les Boucs, a more complicated structure as the hero's psychology is more complex.

As the narration does not respect of chronology, the reader might find it difficult, at the beginning, to see the link between the various parts of Les Boucs. However, a closer reading allows him to identify the markers that are skilfully provided by the novelist and therefore to reconstitute the chronology of the narrative. Here are a few relevant samples that will help clarify the point.

Waldik remembers a "festin de rats"(18) which happened at an unspecified point in the past except that he remembers it as he is now starving, like the cat, which Rauss wants to kill for food. He also relives the expression of Simone's face as she comes to the prison gates on his release; to him she is cold, indifferent, and "plus tard, je devais me rappeler tout cela impitoyablement."(20). On the same day Simone leaves him to give Mac O'Mac the manuscript: "Je suis rentré de prison hier matin."(67). As his son Fabrice is admitted to hospital, we also learn that the Boucs kill the building contractor: "Prophète à taille de pygmée, j'ai à t'apprendre que cette nuit, ils ont tué."(55). As Simone comes back with Mac O'Mac the following day ("Il est à l'hopital depuis hier," 42), and returns home later, Yalann wants her to confess her love affair with Mac O' Mac, of whom Yalann says, "Je l'ai vu ce matin pour la première fois"(68).

This is followed by a projection into the future as Yalann sees himself in Tizi-Ouzou, years later, recounting his own story to the locals (91). At the same time he meets the young Berber (103) of which he says "il sera exploité ou exploiteur."

As he comes back from Algeria "par un ciel froid de Novembre"(109), the door to Simone's house reminds him of the first door he opened in France, that of the reception centre, his misfortune and his disillusionment. Within this flashback is inserted the life of degeneration that is awaiting the young emigrant (123-4).

As he is taken back to the Boucs by his friend Raus, he relives (142-52) his wandering, his misfortune, and his desperate quest for a radio set, which Raus later destroys before he takes Yalann - for the first time - to live with the Boucs. Before the second attempt to live with them, he is taken to Isabelle: "Elle le releva, faillit ne pas le reconnaître. Il s'était laissé pousser la barbe... Ce matin brumeux où elle l'avait relevé, ivre dans la rue, elle ne pensait pas à la pitié. Elle le releva, le fit s'asseoir sur un banc - et lui parla."(176).

Last flash-back in the last pages of the novel (193-4) as he meets the priest in Bône, which is the starting point of Yalann's odyssey, and points to the theme of constant renewal.

The awareness of an uncontrollable circularity is also the feeling of Ben or of any of the workers on the construction site who has become attached to the rusty concrete mixer. Not only is he doing the same unrewarding job day after day, but his state has not improved: barefooted when the narration starts and hungry during the second part of the novel. There is clearly no improvement in the state of the "son of the rusty concrete mixer.' His situation has been deteriorating since he was discharged from the army. This gradual sinking towards the lower scales of society is confirmed by various indicators in the text.

For instance Ben's accommodation is worsening as we go along. Living in a dirty block of flats on Grogan Road, he is soon evicted by the landlord and moves in with Wini in another block of flats that is just as filthy. In tones that echo the Man's description of his flat in The Beautyful Ones, Ben relates his first impression of Wini's place as follows:

> The courtyard was cold and deserted, strewn with inanimate life and a cat. A child's twisted tricycle lay on its side without wheels. The dustbin lay on its side among its spilt contents while the grey cat foraged for food. A chair lay on its side, its only leg raised as though in protest. The whole place was filled with broken bits of things, hundreds of beer bottle tops and an old shoe.(River Road, 4)

His apprehension at taking an early shower is identical to the Man's in The Beautyful Ones:

> The communal shower room was dark, cold and stale-smelling as usual. The floor was littered with broken bits of soap, scrubbing rags, stones, cigarette filters and general trash. slimy green fungus grew on the outer edges of the floor and spread some way up the walls. A woman's blood-stained under pants hung on the nail behind the door. the dim twenty-five-watt electric bulb threw an anemic light on the peeling wall.(River Road, 4)

As Wini abandons Ben and Baby, both are again on the move. They end up in Ocholla's hut, situated in a shanty village across Nairobi River :

> The shanty village lies quiet, breathless, overwhelmed by the suffocating smell of the river. The huts lie low, mysteriously dark, silent and lonely in the overcrowded shanty town. One could get lost here on a moonless night. Nearby the sewage river trickles ghostly along hesitant in the rejected waste, subdued by death and decomposition.(161)

Ocholla's hut, in which they move, is constructed in such an incredible way that it "would make any architect start believing in miracles".(161).

The second indicator of this deterioration is Ben's fluctuating standard of living, if the word is of any adequacy to his case and that of the other construction workers. From an understandably well above the average army salary, Ben tumbles down to a state where his Grogan Road landlord has to

confiscate some of his property to balance two months of unpaid rent. This period is referred to as "days of nausea; the days of hungriness after he lost his job, the hopelessly drunken nights and the weeks of dodging the landlord whenever he was due for rent collection." (3). Although his income improves temporarily as he works with an insurance company, he is soon dismissed when it is discovered that he has been convicted in a court of law. As he meets Wini, moves in with her, and is employed by Yussuf at the construction site, his income improves again though his wages are as low as any other worker's on the site. In fact he is better off than any of the hands; he has no family to provide for, as Wini looks after her child, pays the rent and supplies most of the food. Ben's money meets his own exclusive selfish needs, until she abandons him with the child. Later, when he is promoted to assistant foreman and awarded a pay rise, there does not seem to be any improvement since he is still living in Ocholla's overcrowded hut, a hut in which he now starts claiming a share.

Another element that reinforces the circular and repetitious movement of the narrative is the symbol of Development House, as the construction site is called. Well before it is completed, and while the hands are again facing imminent unemployment, Yussuf's uncle bribes his way into another contract and takes charge of the new site across the road, the new tourist hotel. Although there is good reason to rejoice, the hands see the new project as a continuation of their fate. As the narrator says,

> That ought to be good news for the labourers on Development House. The bloody contractors have managed themselves another work permit and a tender. Right next to their noses is another concrete and grit job. From Development House every hand will transfer to the Sunshine Hotels Limited site. But the hands are not worrying about work. They are hungry.(River Road, 193)

The new hotel is being erected on the site of the labourers' eating houses. Therefore, if they are assured continued employment, they are facing darker prospects; their eating places have to give way to the hotel site even before work has started. The symbol of the hotel has therefore larger connotations for, if the external reader sees it in terms of secured employment, for the labourers themselves it is a continuation of their servitude. For them this is the expression of a larger social mechanism and of a larger system that aims at crushing them. As Eustace Palmer aptly points out:

> Mwangi hits on the clever device of using the framework of the construction of the luxurious twenty-four-storey building as a means of presenting the experiences of the ordinary workers whose life-styles are in such contrast to all that the building represents, but who must look forward to its

completion with apprehension since it means unemployment. The building fittingly suggests that while 'development' goes on in one form, squalor and poverty still coexist with it. It symbolizes the indifference of the authorities to the sufferings of the masses, which the corruption of politics and the police, the inequalities of the system and the high cost of living help to accentuate. (Palmer, 1979, 317)

What actually gives Going Down River Road its circular shape is the feeling the characters have of being caught in a defeating mechanism. As Ben remarks in the opening chapter when he joins the throng of workers going to the city centre, they have the impression of being caught in an endless revolving wheel :

> The whole field was swarming with path-finders walking to their work stations. The cold wind that blew across it carried, in the same medium with the smell of shit and urine, the occasional murmur, the rare expression of misery, uncertainty and resignation. They walked slowly, quietly, their slow tortured boots kneading the mud and shit on the path. Every now and then one of them stopped to add hot urine to the dough. Then they resumed their march, the endless routine trudge, the tramp of the damned at the Persian wheel. (River Road, 5-6)

The same idea of human beings being chained to an endless process over which they have no control is again to be found in Les Boucs. As they are described , the "boucs" are "ce peuple le long du temps" who go on their daily work search at dawn :

> Ils marchaient à la file indienne dans le matin brumeux [...](25). Ils avaient le pas pesant, les bras ballants et la face effarée. [...](26). Leurs pieds quittaient à peine le sol, comme si la pesanteur eût reconnu en ces êtres de futurs et excellents minéraux et les eût déjà liés à la terre....(Les Boucs, 27)
>
> ["They walked Indian file in the foggy morning... They had a heavy step, their arms just hung at their sides, and their faces were marked with fear.... Their feet barely left the earth, as if the weight of them was conscious of these beings as potentially rich minerals, and had already bound them to the soil." (Harter, 19-20)]

The only difference between Chraibi's butts and Mwangi's labourers is that, apart from the setting which is that of a foreign country, the former are less fortunate than the latter; they are desperately looking for a job which, we already know, they will never get. Apart from these minor differences both groups are victims of a situation which, far from being a temporary phenomenon, is rather more of a permanent system.

The idea of the unbeatable nature of the system is what adds a note of despair to a situation which already inspires us with pity. The symptoms of this continuity are to be found in the cycles in which these two groups find themselves caught. For instance the pair of street sweepers the labourers meet on their way to their work stations, and then Susan, the young prostitute Ben meets in the Eden Centre, which reminds him of Wini. As Ben notices for the sweepers, it was hard to tell

> whether they had just come or had been at it all night. Like the hard black tarmac road they swept, they had something of a belonging about them, some sort of permanency... The two sweepers, their brooms and their street belonged to one another. the rainy, misty twilights and dawns were their lot. The days did not belong to them. And that was permanent.(River Road, 6-7)

The same comment can be found in The Beautyful Ones when the Man describes the sweeper who enters his office at the end of the day, dragging:

> his goods across the floor. His walk was slow and dazed, and he was tired at the beginning of his night. the night was the end of a long day filled with two jobs pieced together, and the night cleaning job was number three. So even at the beginning of the night the sweeper was tired and almost walking in his sleep."(The Beautyful Ones, 32-3).

Ben also experiences an identical feeling of continuity when he picks up a sixteen-year-old prostitute in Eden Centre. As they go upstairs and have sex in a room where her friend is fornicating with another man, and as her month-old baby, sleeping in a paper carton across the room, starts yelling, Ben is overwhelmed by a feeling of nausea and cannot stand it any longer:

> He fidgets restlessly, shuffles to his feet. He drops a pound, his last pound, on the bed and storms out, pursued by her sobs. He remembers Wini. Baby must have been that old some day. And now he remembers Wini's letter- 'the baby, our baby, not your baby but his'. Ben curses. His head spins, his stomach turning in protest against the stink. Nausea rises from the base of his tummy and hits the roof of his mouth.[...](River Road, 130).

The obsessive image of Wini - perhaps a psychological representation of the figure of the mother - is a permanent one. When it is not associated with Susan, the young prostitute described earlier, Ben has a living image of her in the person of Baby. His reluctance, his inability to get rid of him suggests the durable aspect of Ben's defeat. Moreover, as Baby grows up, we understand that he is bound to become a delinquent and follow on the steps of his mother.

Another sign of the continuing dominance of the system is to be found in the way the shanty village is burnt down at dawn and rebuilt overnight. As the 'health enforcement gang' prepares to set fire to his shack, Ocholla explains his resignation. There is no use arguing with the health squad, he tells Ben. Their reply is mechanical: they have to do a job. As a consequence both parties have come to an undebated agreement: let them raze the shacks, and let us rebuild them right away. This "cyclicality" is what is apparent in the narrator's remark:

> There is something malignant about shanty huts. They go up in the smoke at dawn, spring to life again by twilight. One just cannot keep them down. The council knows this. Char them as many times as you like and they mushroom back just as many times. Sticks, wire, paper and iron sheets is all it takes. The shanty house is reborn, maybe a bit frail, but quite potent and once again a health hazard. People have got to eat, defecate, live. (River Road, 179)

It has now become a matter of reflexes. No one panics. The illegal tenants of Nairobi Valley remain unimpressed: they simply salvage their property and wait for the health gang to go in order to start building again:

> The whole of Nairobi Valley is awake in chaos. Up and down the stinking murky river fire, huge tongues of red hot fire, lick up contraptions of paper and wood and extend impotent black smoke to the dark heavens above. Shanty dwellers mill around saving whatever is possible. No one cries, not even the babies. They are all expert players. The game is survival. The whole family just play a role. Their part demands they keep calm, tolerant, and when the public health army is gone, rebuild with the same quiet patience and determination. (River Road, 177)

For Angus Calder too, there are many indicators in the text that show how mechanical the urban universe of Going Down River Road is. To him,

> the 'tramp of the damned on the Persian wheel' is made to reveal a mechanical character- the city, which might seem chaotic, in fact runs according to rules, repetitively. It is implied that no one can break out of the 'system'. Ben converses with two contented street sweepers, and muses: 'the two sweepers, their brooms and their street belonged to one another... And that was permanent. A City Council policeman and an unlicenced road cobbler are neighbours 'who spend days racing each other round the town in the course of their duties, before coming home to be good neighbours for the night'. On pay day everything happens according to the system. Workers rush to get drunk and to whore; robbers lurk to take what's left over, seeing that as their monthly packet.
> [In River Road as in Taste of Death, Mwangi's] shallow prose projects a vision of mankind in the mass as mechanical, unable to escape from the systems they find themselves in. He is, in

> effect, fatalistic. [...] All Ben wants at the end of Going Down River Road is to share a shanty with Ocholla, which will be burnt down by the city authorities as a matter of routine, then rebuilt again. Having worked on 'Development House', obeying the system which raises skyscrapers, Ben and Ocholla will go on to build the next skyscraper. (Calder, 1984, 187-8)

If Ben and Ocholla feel that they are powerless objects in a repetitive and defeating mechanism, they are however luckier than Meja and Maina. The two unfortunate heroes of Kill Me Quick are left no choice. Caught between the legitimate parental expectations on the one hand, and on the other, the urban conditions that have no room for unqualified school-leavers, they are compelled to take act as cogs in a system of gear-wheels that restricts them to the back streets, the Shanty Land, and later cell number Nine. Both Meja and Maina are aware that there is no way out. This absence of hope is rendered in a rock imagery that is also to be found in Les Boucs, but also in the feeling that elements are hostile and go against the protagonists. In Meja's mind there is the belief that the country's environment is less hostile than the city's. The city is often associated with violence, malice, and has evil connotations. As Maina tells him , here "Everybody tried to cheat you, from the ragged scrap metal buyer to the barrel woman for whom you chopped wood."(10). Not only are the city dwellers dishonest, but the elements, such as the rock described later, are hostile too. In comparison, the more familiar neighbourhood of the village is more reassuring. As he is observing and listening to the passengers in the bus that takes him home, he feels more secure:

> In the corner of the bus the young man watched with a twitching nose and drew comfort from the fact that these were his people, that they spoke his merry tongue, and he could understand. Nobody asked him what he was doing here in the corner or where he was going and he was glad about this too.(Kill Me Quick, 90).

However, as soon as he sees the reproachful face of the loved ones in the form of his younger sister, he flies back as quickly as he can, and his mental representation of the country changes. A light wind starts "blowing with all the chill that only a country wind could carry and the birds in their nests by the roadside twittered their protest."(98). Though he tries to protect himself in his tattered clothing, the wind gets through and his teeth start chattering uncontrollably. And to increase his misery, as he is lying in the grass on the roadside waiting for an early lift, he is attacked by a squadron of voracious mosquitoes who transform his body into maddeningly itching pieces of skin. Even the drivers he is asking for a lift

are much less friendly than expected and he has to jump off the road several times to save himself.

On his return to the village Maina too feels a similar hostility of the elements. The village is suffering from a prolonged drought against which the magic man and his sacrifices are helpless. Everybody and everything in the village is hungry and lean; a few people die of starvation and disappointment, while the cattle and livestock are dying in dozens. On top of the drought and famine, "a whirlwind came down from across the stream bringing a hot dust into the village. From up above the sun smiled majestically at the desolate land below. He was much pleased with his work. Much pleased."(Kill Me Quick, 128). On his way back from the village, the rock cliff Meja has to face as he is undergoing a probation test to become a miner in a quarry looks equally hostile. As the foreman takes him to his work station,

> They all looked at the high cliff with its many jagged faces. It stood tall and solid and stared defiantly back at them. Meja could almost see it breathing power, unbeatable and unbreakable. Almost like the barrel shoulders of the foreman and his miners.
> 'See what I mean?' the foreman said, 'It is almost invincible, that rock is. I hate to look at it myself. It seems endlessly strong. And that is what you are asking to go against, armed with a pick I am not sure you can lift. (Kill Me Quick, 104-5).

And though Meja is more than willing to do the job and is fully equipped with picks, wedges and mallet and told to just lift the mallet and bash it against the rock, he is irremediably defeated. Despite his colossal efforts, the rock does not yield. In a piece of advice that could well apply to Meja's other experiences in the city, Ngigi the assistant foreman justly tells him to

> take it easy. It is rocks you are fighting against, not people. You have got to make use of tact as well as strength. You cannot hurt the rock by any feelings. It understands nothing less than strength. Just go about it cleverly. Follow the line of weakness on the rock and you will bring the whole mountain down. Otherwise you will kill yourself. (Kill Me Quick, 110).

Following Ngigi's advice, he brings down a whole rockface, passes the probation test and finally gets the job. In his happy thoughts of secured employment, his day's work becomes the "greatest sweetest amount of rock" the crusher had ever had. The euphoria however does not last long. The quarry runs dry, they are all dismissed, and the Asian owner goes in search of more rock. Meja and a few friends spend some time in the city in

friends' houses but they quickly return to the backstreets, fall in with gangs and go from bad to worse until he finally ends up in Cell number Nine where he meets Maina, therefore starting the whole cycle again, as when they both were in the back streets of the city.

As he arrives in number Nine and is welcomed by Maina and the other occupiers of the cell who urge him to narrate his story, we are reminded of Maina's advising him to keep away from his friends who were fresh from prison and who came back to the backstreets determined to make a fresh start: "Once a person tasted the prison life he could not help going there a second time'(9). Beyond Maina's advice is the idea of a repetitious mechanism that is routine-like and cannot be stopped. As the delinquents arrive in prison, "The Chief warder handed out the usual disciplinary speech to the new prisoner. And as usual the prisoner paid little attention to what he was being told."(115). Moreover the scene of the green van unloading its regular "load of public headache". i.e. delinquents, is significantly emphasised in a passage which, already announced in the dedication, is repeated word for word from the beginning of chapter ten to the beginning of chapter twelve:

> The green van turned away from the main road and drove along the dust-road leading to the prison... At the heavily built gates half a mile further on, the van stopped, the gates were thrown open, and the driver turned into the inner compound. Over at the office he stopped, jumped out of the cab, stretched himself and yawned lazily.
> The Chief warder saw the prison van come and watched the usual driver step out. He watched the van and its driver for a moment wondering what they had brought him this time. He bet with himself which one of his usual boys had been brought back, then walked out of the office to find out. He walked deliberately slowly to the van driver. (Kill Me Quick, 113, repeated 137).

In this passage various expressions allow the narrator to render the familiarity of the scene. The prison van is referred to as the usual green van, the definite article suggesting that it cannot be mistaken for any other one. Similarly the Chief warder and the van driver are no vague and indefinite figures. Phrases such as "this time," "the usual boys," combined with a sense of bottomless boredom in the prison staff who repeat the same actions over and over again suggest the rate of frequency of such scenes. Here for instance is how Meja is received by the same staff on his second incarceration:

> 'Same regulations as before?' Meja asked.
> 'Same as before,' the warder told him.
> 'Back to number Nine?' Meja asked.

'The other nodded busily, filling in a form.
'All the others back yet?'
'All but one,' the warder said. 'Put your fingerprints now.'
He pushed the file across the table to Meja. 'You remember where to stamp them?'
Meja took the file and went through it ramming his fingerprints in it. He knew just where to put which print. He had done it often enough.
The aged Chief warder stood back and watched him and wondered. What went wrong with these young men he could not understand. They came the first time scared and sorry for their crimes. Then it seemed they could not stop coming back. Most of them he was sure would be buried in the prisoner's cemetery when they died of old age.(Kill Me Quick, 138-9).

Similar expressions denoting familiarity and repetitiveness can also be read in Les Boucs. To begin with, the remark of the Catholic priest - "J'ai sauvé une âme" - and even the whole last chapter of the novel suggest that the young shoe-shine boy's itinerary has a highly paradigmatic value. This is further confirmed when Yalann arrives in France and is caught in the system of the Gennevilliers caves, the "Centre d'Accueil," leading to an open door on unemployment, vagrancy and prison. As he enters the so-called "centre d'accueil," he is the object of an organised search procedure at the end of which he receives a simple unemployment card. He is successively taken in charge by people who, like the prison warder in Kill Me Quick, insist on being called "patron," "contremaître," "monsieur le commissaire".... Like Meja's cellmates who stare at him as he arrives in number Nine draped in a blanket, Yalann is struck by the glare of the numerous Arabs that live in the place.

Quarante-huit paires d'yeux d'Arabes le piquèrent comme autant de pointes d'épée, le dénudèrent, l'épluchèrent, l'estimèrent, en une fraction de seconde plus dense que l'éternité - quarante-huit paires d'yeux tout de suite éteints et baissés, mornes. (Les Boucs, 110)
[Forty-eight pairs of Arab eyes stung him like as many swords points. They stripped him down, picked him apart, and assessed him in a fraction of a second that was longer than eternity - forty-eight pairs of eyes just as quickly extinguished and lowered, dejected. (Harter, 70-1)]

Like Meja who returns the police station blanket, on entry Yalann's possessions are taken by the various "patrons," "contremaitres," including his shoe laces in exchange for which, like Meja's cell number written on his chest, he receives a copper plate with the number 302 engraved on it. From then on, Yalann becomes a mere number, "un simple matricule"(115).

Like the Chief warder who fills in a form for Meja, the "commissaire" in Les Boucs asks Yalann into his office and takes down his particulars on a form: first name, surname, date and place of birth, unemployment card

number, ... The symbolism of numbers announced in Yalann's "matricule" is reinforced by the confidential statistics revealed to him by the "commissaire".

Like Commissaire Dupont who literally says he is fed up with receiving newcomers whose numbers keep growing, the old Chief warder wonders what load of delinquents the yawning van driver is bringing him this time. He tells the driver: "Maybe you think I love dealing in these cases. Well, you are wrong. I don't. I hope it is not another flogging case."(Kill Me Quick, 113). His fatherly and understanding attitude towards Meja is reciprocated in Les Boucs in Dupont's sincere advice to Yalann :

> Ne reviens plus jamais, hurla-t-il. Il n'y a pas de travail, pas de gîte, pas d'aide, pas de fraternité. Que des plaques de cuivre, des interrogatoires d'identité, des cartes de chômage et des promesses. Rien d'autre. Et moi, je ne suis rien d'autre qu'une outre de graisse et de bière pendue au flanc de l'administration.(Les Boucs, 122-3)
> ["Don't ever come back ," he yelled. "There is no work. No lodging. No help. No fraternity. There`are only copper tags and forms to fill out and unemployment cards and promises. Nothing else. And me, I'm just an old goatskin full of fat and beer stuck to the flank of bureaucracy." (Harter, 78)]

Like the prisoners in cell number Nine, the "boucs" of Les Boucs are referred to as the "résiduels," the pariahs. As Yalann refers to them, they all looked alike, and they were the hardest of the hard cases :

> Pas une prison, pas un asile, pas une Croix Rouge n'en voulaient. Eux, honnêtement, faisaient tous les jours leur possible: des vols, des bagarres au couteau, des dépressions nerveuses - qui les eussent (ils continuaient de le croire) logés et nourris. Les policiers accomplissaient soigneusement leur devoir: ils les passaient à tabac, les relachaient ensuite... Mais j'ai commis un vol! - Allez, houste, dehors! pas d'histoire. (Les Boucs, 28)
> ["No prison, no asylum, not even a Red Cross office would accept them. Day after day they did their best: robberies, knife fights, bouts of depression - which they thought, and kept on believing, could get them free bed and board. The police played their part well. They worked them over a bit, and then released them... But I stole something! - Go on, out! Outside! No arguments!" (Harter, 21)]

In Fragments, this phenomenon of exclusion is to be read in the confrontational structures that govern the relationship between the liminal figures and the conforming ones. The object of this segregation is now the artist figure, the one who wants to create. This relationship is rendered in terms of conflict, in a structure of opposites. In a general survey of the

complex web of relations between the creative artist, state and the masses of society in Africa Mbye Baboucar Cham (1984) writes that the contemporary African artist "is not only concerned with matters of aesthetics and technique" he underlines the fact that he is a product of the society, that is a political, economic, social and professional figure. "He is a part of the intellectual elite with a sharp awareness of the internal dynamics of his society and the world in which it interacts with other forces, but he is also the most perceptive critic and challenger of this elite because of his commitment to the welfare of the people." (Cham, 1984, 23). This anti-static and pro-populist aspect of their own work comes in the form of a "structure of opposites," a dominant structural pattern that one finds in most African novels.

The nature and interactions of the forces that coexist and shape African society are examined within the framework of this structure of opposites, and the concept of opposites derives from a conception of these forces as being antagonistic and, therefore, locked in conflict. (Cham, 1984, 23)

This conflict is represented here in a confrontational relationship between the square and the circle, the center and the periphery, the powerful and the powerless. In the three novels of Ayi Kwei Armah, it takes the form of binary oppositions which associate each thing with its opposite. To begin with this is applicable to the characters or types represented here. The man and the Teacher for instance are opposed to the Koomsons and other "heroes of the gleam" ; Baako the atypical one is described against the conforming Brempong, whereas Modin is made to contrast with the "blessed ones," i.e. those who tend to view themselves as the "cross-overs" of the Greek tradition. This is why Danièle Stewart writes, "On est donc bien ici au niveau mythologique: d'une part les dieux, d'autre part les hommes. Entre les deux, les demi-dieux, c'est-à-dire ceux qui peuvent voyager d'un monde à l'autre" (Stewart, 1973, 202).

Square/circle, centre/periphery.

Beyond this allegorical comparison, the underlying structure of Armah's œuvre is the confrontational existence of two worlds: the world of the ones who are in control, and therefore powerful, and that of the ones who are weak and therefore incapable. This kind of relationship can be read for example in the symbol of 'The Brand' in Fragments. It is the title of a script Baako submits to Asante Smith, and according to him it is inspired by Doctor Aggrey, the Grandfather of the nation and founder of Achimota College who used to refer to himself as "a brand plucked from the burning" (209). This is chosen by Baako to criticize the educated élite that runs the place.

To him, "this Aggrey kind of attitude is important. The educated really thinking of the people here as some kind of devils in a burning hell, and themselves the happy plucked ones, saved." (210). The symbol is based on the association of the circle and the square:

> SINGLE DARK CIRCLE FILLING THE SCREEN, REPRESENTING THE WEAK PERIPHERY, LARGE ENVIRONMENT, HABITAT OF THE OPPRESSED.
> ON WHICH A SQUARE IS SUPERIMPOSED, WHITE, THE TOUGH CONCRETIZED FORTIFICATION...
> LADDER LEADING FROM WEAK CIRCLE TO STRONG SQUARE...
> JUSTIFICATION CONSISTS OF HERO'S REITERATED PROMISE HE'S ONLY CLIMBING UP TO FIND THE MEANS TO LIBERATE THOSE WHOSE SHOULDERS HE'S CLIMBED ON...
> THE CLIMB ITSELF, THE PROCESS OF GETTING TO THE SQUARE, HAS INJECTED INTO HIS BEING AN ADDICTION TO WAYS AND HABITS DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED TO THE LIBERATOR'S CAREER...
> [AN] OLD MAN [WHO SAYS] THAT THE HOT PROMISES ARE WORTH NOTHING, THAT
> THE HERO AS HE RISES WILL GET ACCUSTOMED TO BREATHING THE AIR UP THERE AND WANT TO STAY, NOT TO RETURN TO THE MUD. HE SAYS HE DOESN'T MIND ANYONE GETTING UP THERE, BUT AS FOR KILLING HIMSELF TO GET THEM UP THERE, NO THANKS...
> [A] WEEPING WOMAN [SAYS] SHE'S OLD ENOUGH TO KNOW THE SQUARE IS THERE NOT TO ABSORB THE CIRCLE BUT TO WIPE IT OUT...
> ABOVE THEM THE SQUARE PEOPLE IN WHITE- WHITE PERENNIAL COLONIAL SCHOOLBOYS, HARD WITH AN EXTERIOR SHINE, EXHIBITIONISTIC, SELF GRATULATING. SOME OF THESE ROAM THE CIRCLE IN COMPACT CORPS, SELECTING AT INTERVALS PROSPECTIVE CLIMBERS, ISOLATING THEM WITH A REPEATED RITUAL OF CONGRATULATION AND SUSTAINED PRAISE. (Fragments, 210-3).

In this symbolic representation, the square and the circle stand for two antithetic universes which however are made to communicate. The ladder is the link between them but it is a human ladder, "made up of the shoulders of the inhabitants of the lower level". The climb is justified in so far as the climbers promise the oppressed ones a better future. As it is said however, the process of climbing transforms the nature of the climber who becomes a different man then who views the ones in the lower level with condescension. The lower level is referred to as mud, whereas the upper level is a kind of Olympus where the air the selected ones breathe is different, thus explaining why, in the words of the old man, none of them is ready to do a reverse crossing. The very nature of the two worlds makes them completely incompatible; one is a circle, the other one a square. The latter intends to wipe the former out. The latter is inhabited by the selected few, the brands, who view the others of the lower level "as some kind of devils in a burning hell".

A similar separation can also be read in Why Are We So Blest? in which the square/circle relationship becomes that of centre and periphery. This is Modin who expresses the distinction between center and periphery. For him

> the choices are clear. Those who stay in the peripheral areas intellectually, emotionally, psychologically, are not lonely. They are in touch with home, not cut off. The price they pay for not being lonely, however, is that they suffer the crudest forms of manipulation, mystification, planned ignorance.
> Those who shift from the periphery to the center can hope to escape some of these cruder forms of manipulation. But the price they pay is loneliness, separation from home, the constant necessity to adjust to what is alien, eccentric to the self. All this is in the present structuring of the machinery for acquiring knowledge, not in the essential nature of the learning process itself. (Why?, 33)

Quite like the inhabitants of the square, the African students going to the periphery undergo some kind of change. Modin who has noticed that reckons that she should have stopped going to these lectures which were part of an evil ritual designed to transform him and his likes into a mere factor.

As can be read in the previous passages from the two novels, the notion of the circle, which is a key concept in the Akan world view, is given here negative connotations and implications because it functions only in one of Armah's two orders of experience, the 'metaphysical', as opposed to the 'material. In the words of Wright, "whenever rituality and cyclicality converge in a religious or metaphysical context in the novels, the evaluation is positive. When they meet in a material context, the evaluation is negative." (Wright D., 1985, 338)

An example of such a 'metaphysical' context can be read in Baako's departure ceremony. Naana's belief that "the unbrokenness of the circle is maintained by the performance of ritual acts such as libation, prayer, sacrifice, and the offering of thanks" are ever present in the ceremony. And it is in order to hold the circle unbroken that she makes sure everything is done according to the custom. What she does not realize yet is that the ritual has been shifted from a 'metaphysical' to a 'material' context. It has become only a cycle of futile repetition and recurrence; it has lost its religious sense and "is connected instead to a cargo circuit of commodities. Its modern degradation leads not to a departure from the psychology of the cyclical process but to an impatient acceleration of that process in its diversion to profit-making purposes." (Wright D., 1985, 339)

When it is transferred into a material context, the circle of the weak periphery is broken. Its inhabitants are not concerned with the preservation of its interconnectedness but they have become blind devotees of the square.

They have become addicted to ways which are diametrically opposed to theirs and are shown thus to indulge in some form of suicide because the square represents "the final death of the circle". While the inhabitants of the circle accept their own death in order to climb to the square, Modin also understands the suicidal aspect of his European educational cycle: "The directions made available to me within this arrangement are all suicidal. I am supposed to get myself destroyed out of my own free-seeming choice." (Why?, 31). This awareness is only shared by the old ones, the veterans depicted in the three novels who know the veritable nature of the climb: "The climb after privilege. Studying for degrees. Degrees separate the hustlers from the damned..." (156), graduates who are, as is indicated in Why Are We So Blest?, "Happy to get degrees, then go home and relax on the shoulders of our sold people." (161)

Powerful/powerless

This awareness of the real aspect of things is to be found with the artist figures only. However, these artist figures are often caught in a world that spits on the values they represent. A literary expression of this conflictual relationship can be read in various episodes such as the killing of the rabid dog, the confinement of Baako, and also the episode of the fishermen and the boy. As Stewart writes, "Baako voit dans l'enfant le symbole même de l'artiste qu'il voudrait être, 'donnant à ces hommes quelque chose qui leur manquait'... L'enfant, dans cet épisode, est rebuté mais toléré." (Stewart, 1973, 206). This is a key passage for it condenses Armah's vision of the artist, and therefore should be quoted at length:

> Both groups of men went up beyond the sand and there tied the ends of their ropes around the trunks of coconut trees. After that they rushed down to the sea and dragged more rope with them toward the anchoring trees, making slow snaking piles of them. A boy rushed enthusiastically down and back twice with them, but the third time up he got in the way of a huge, towering man who knocked him sideways flat into the sand. The boy rose scratching his head as if what had happened had just now made him lose certainty of his place in life....
> The boy had found a gong. He struck it again and this time the sound was hoarse and deep. Making tentative noises, he struck alternate deep and high notes; in a while what sounded at first like his playful sounds had taken on a definite rhythm, and he kept it up. The men came with their rope, sweating, and each time took little notice of the boy. But they were now quieter, and some seemed a bit tired already, so that they were taking more and more time going down to the sea and back, moving into a clearer pace. Then in a gap of quiet when neither the breeze nor the men's voices were high, the small

> boy added his voice to the beating of his gong. It was a clear voice, high as a woman's, and the song it was carrying could have been anything about the sea, like a woman's long lament for one more drowned fisherman. One irritated strong man kicked sand at the boy and shouted at him, perhaps to shut him up; he stopped his singing only briefly, recovered and continued. On the next return another big-bodied man, this one with a slow, pensive step, one of those who had reached the bay in the canoe, took up the song, his voice deeper but his rhythm the same. Where the two singers paused the only refrain was the sound of the sea, till one after the other the remaining men and a few of the waiting women began also to hum endings to the song. The men dug their feet deep into the sand and pulled from fixed positions on the rope." (Fragments, 127-8)

In this description, the weak and defenceless young boy is contrasted with the more numerous figures of the fishermen who are stronger than him. It is exactly the same 'rapport de force' that we find in the hunters/hunted episodes of both the rabid dog and the madman. Facing the powerless creature, a group of men with a determination to kill are armed with weapons and Juana notices that their force and cruelty is disproportionate. The powerful group of men is opposed to the weak dying dog, and she notes that "they were a lot of men around just one dying dog, and a fear could be seen in them whose strength was strange, seeing that the source of it was such a powerless thing." (Fragments, 18)

When Baako becomes mad, he is identified with a rabid dog whose bite or scratch could make one mad, he is clearly outnumbered by the group of hunters. He is followed to start with by a group of children who are throwing stones at him and pushing him to exhaustion: " At this rate [Baako reflects] they could follow him till he dropped exhausted and then they would do whatever it was they were running after him straining to do." (Fragments, 170). The hostility of his pursuers becomes more evident when they are asked by his sister Araba to tie him up. He is so tired that he is unable to oppose any resistance. Later, he even reckons that the loved ones had a right to their expectations.

A similar hostility of domination governs the relationship between the driver and the passengers of the bus in The Beautyful Ones. While the conductor was counting the money "a pair of wide-open, staring eyes met his... The eyes frightened the conductor... Was this giver turned watcher already? Had his own game been merely a part of the watcher's larger game?" (3-4). In order to guarantee his silence, the conductor offers to bribe the Man. But when the former realizes than the latter was only sleeping: "The watcher was no watcher after all, only a sleeper. Words shot out angrily

from the conductor's mouth with an explosive imperiousness that woke the sleeper. You bloodyfucking sonofabitch! Article of no commercial value! You think the bus belongs to your grandfather?" (5-6) The man gets off the bus and crosses the road where he is almost run over by an oncoming car and its driver insults him calling him an "uncircumcised baboon" (The Beautyful Ones, 9).

In this structure of opposites, the square is seen to be opposed to the circle, the center to the periphery, the powerful to the powerless and the heroes to the sleepers. The old ones also are the object of a similar treatment for when Naana inquires about the situation of Baako, no one pays attention to her words, and someone even silences her.

In the above section are reviewed the structures of some novels which are chosen for their relevance to the theme. However it should be kept in mind that there are two sets of novels, as already mentioned in relation to the expectations connected to the desire of the voyage. In the first group one finds narratives which are developed according to a fairly chronological sequence, implying that there is no disorder in the societies they describe. Order is respected and the expectations relating to the voyage are met. Tribute is duly paid to ancestral values; the returning one is faithful to his mission, and he corresponds to the image of the hero. In this category belong such novels as Ousmane Socé's Mirages de Paris, Aké Loba's Kocoumbo l'étudiant noir. One characteristic they have in common is their description of societies that present no major conflict.

The second set of novels is announced by L'Aventure Ambiguë in which the structure is particular. It is built into two symmetrical parts and an epilogue. This structure suggests that, in the mind of Samba Diallo, there is an attempt to understand a given situation. Part one reads as the exposition of a thesis, which is checked against an antithesis in the second part. The last section is expected to be a synthesis, an attempt to find a solution. However, it is precisely the absence of answer, the inability to decide, that provokes the symbolic death of Samba Diallo.

The structure of L'Aventure Ambiguë again points to the second set of novels in which the structures are of two kinds: one that follows the mental structure of events recreated according to the artificial order of memory and of the psychology of the hero; the other, a more conscious one, as it is chosen on purpose by the novelist in order to imply that the order has been upset, that there is a flaw somewhere in society.

The been-to's of the first category, who develop a mental structure, show a tendency to introspection as no one understands them, and also as a way of finding refuge in a world that gives a feeling of security. While recreating the succession of events in their own minds, they give their narrative a particular structure. The societies described this time are subject to conflicting forces which are epitomised in the been-to's who live in a world that is a photographic negative of the original. Order is no longer relevant and it is replaced by disorder.

One of the manifestations of this chaos is the fact that something unexpected has happened: the expectations of the group are not met by the been-to who thus becomes marginal. One of the reasons for his marginal behaviour is the awareness that it is the society itself that has betrayed its own values. This is transparent in the novels of Armah with the reference to the image of the sacred cycle of departure and return for example. The narrative of the Beautyful Ones, for example, is built around the symbol of the bus which opens the novel and reappears again at the end, meaning therefore that there is an eternal renewal. This is in accordance with the Akan view of the cycle of departure and return in which each departure is like a death, and the return is assimilated with a form of rebirth. However this is far from being a fecund renewal. The cycle is rather sterile as it does not give birth to anything positive. Their awareness of the perversion of this cycle transforms the been-to's into anti-heroes who are quickly segregated to the margins of society.

The awareness of this conflict between what should have happened and what is actually happening develops in the heroes a kind of schizophrenia. They hesitate between two opposing models: their own, and that of the conforming ones. As a consequence, most of the heroes are duplicated as if the novelists could not represent a complete figure without its double that looks exactly like him. This is valid in Les Boucs for example where Yalann Waldik and Raus have many features in common. The former is all bones, the latter is very thin. They use a similar poetic language. Yalann says of his companion, "il a exactement ma peau"(15), "il avait exactement ma hargne"(42). Raus is even further convinced that they so alike that even Simone would not see any difference if he took his place in the bed next to her. As he says, "Et moi. Comme si je m'étais coulé dans ta peau, tels ces mollusques dans une nouvelle coquille."(Les Boucs, 54)

Apart from this positive twin, the hero also has a negative double in the person of Mac O'Mac. "Il est l'auteur bien pensant de *Sainte Famille*, contrairement à Waldik qui a décrit une famille dont les membres s'entre-dévorent. A Mac O'Mac la réussite littéraire et matérielle; à Waldik le

dénuement et le manque d'appuis pour ses débuts littéraires." (Kadra-Hadjadji, 1986, 72).

JANUS LIKE HEROES: THE HEROES AND THEIR DOUBLES.

This duplication of the characters into two halves, a positive one and a negative one, is a recurrent theme in many African novels. This has already been pointed out in connection with the novels of Armah in the contrast between the conforming and the liminal ones. It is also a technique that is used by Mwangi, Mphahlele, Salih and Achebe.

Kill Me Quick, for example, portrays two young protagonists, one of whom (Meja) is totally inexperienced and is contrasted with tutor-like figures with whom he develops a friendly relationship. When he goes to prison, he discovers that there is between him and the old warder a fatherly relationship. As the old man keeps advising the boy for his own good, Meja admits that

> He liked the old man more than he made evident. The old fellow was fatherly and understanding and what any person in Meja's position needed most was understanding. Each time Meja was shoved back into prison, the old man counselled him sincerely, then always let him go in time for dinner. That was one of the many reasons Meja was never rude to him. (Kill Me Quick, 139).

In so being advised by the old warder, Meja is presented as the inexperienced one, one who constantly needs a tutor. As he goes to his cell, he finds other prisoners who are much more experienced than he is. If Meja is coming for the first time, one of his cellmates declares proudly he hopes to live long enough to make the ninth comeback.

Beyond the fact that Meja is the absolute newcomer who asks naive questions, what is basically emphasised here is the existence of doubles. As Meja and Maina narrate their own story to each other since they were separated in the chase, we understand that each individual itinerary is closely similar to every other one. Meja and Maina are easily interchangeable and the latter acts as the former's double.

To begin with, the dedication makes it clear that it is the story of all the Mejas: it is "dedicated to all those little Mejas still in the back streets of the city, destined to stay there until they come of age, when the green van will come and whisk them off to Number Nine." There are therefore parallel circles in Kill Me Quick showing that all itineraries are bound to be the same. Meja's young sister Wambui has no sooner entered school that she dreams of going to the city: "My father says that if I read well I can also come to the city and get a job like you."(94). As she is desirous to imitate her elder brother, Meja acts as a model for her. In the city Meja in turn discovers another model, a positive double and a veteran in the person

of Maina who arrived there before him, carrying similar hopes and expectations. " 'I came out here raw and proud the way you are,' Maina said to Meja [...] 'I thought I would get a job and earn six-seven hundred shillings a month. Then I would get a house, a radio, good clothes and food."(Kill Me Quick, 1). The narration insists on the points of similarity between them, and we very often find phrases underlining their common points. Meja for instance listens to Maina recounting his experience and "As Maina spoke he listened and drew parallels with his own sad story." Both of their parents accepted heavy sacrifices to give them basic education, and both were school "book worms" who seemed to be facing a prosperous future in the city. However, both end up in the back streets, as their parents face drought and starvation while they are left expecting a long-awaited money-order to help them survive. Both of them become delinquents and end up in the same cell in the local prison. As they successively return to their respective villages, they are overcome by a feeling of guilt at having failed in meeting their family's expectations.

In this dual relationship however we should underline that, like Yalann who is taken in charge by Raus, Meja is the newcomer who finds a veteran and a tutor in Maina. The "veteran of the streets" as Meja calls him, is constantly advising him. Phrases such as "Maina did most of the talking and Meja listened as patiently as ever."(1), or "He followed Maina's example" or "Maina taught him a lot of things"(9) suggest the importance of this tutorial relationship. As he sees for instance that Meja is reluctant to live on rotten food, Maina tells Meja :

> 'I don't blame you for having a soft stomach,' Maina said taking a big bite of the chocolate. 'I wouldn't taste the stuff myself when I first came out here. I lived like a god on porridge and posho. But there was no job for anybody, anywhere. The same story everywhere. "Qualifications? Get out." "Second Division," I would start to say before they banged the door shut.'(Kill Me Quick, 2).

As Maina points out, he speaks from experience. The key for survival as he advises the perplexed Meja is to "Forget about your first division and learn to live with the world. It is everybody for himself and the devil with the school certificate."(8).

Despite this reciprocal relationship however, Maina is at times Meja's positive double as discussed above, his negative double at other times. Maina for instance is the experienced , shrewd and intelligent one, whereas Meja is more inexperienced, innocent and slightly naive. It is Maina who plays the tricks and Meja who gets the blame. For example, as Maina steals apples from the supermarket it is Meja who is caught . As Maina steals from

and plays vengeful tricks on the cook in the farm, it is Meja's ration and wages that are cut by half. As the former confesses,

> It has never crossed Maina's mind that Meja might be promoted to working in the kitchen if ever he was demoted. To him, Meja was destined for hoes and watering cans. His hands and feet and even his strong young shoulders were shaped for bending over young shoots and tending them. And what did Meja know about the kitchen anyway? Had he not failed to get a job as a kitchen-boy in the cheap Arab restaurant only a few months back? Brains is what it took to work in the kitchen, especially a farmhouse kitchen, and he, Maina, told his friend this many times. (Kill Me Quick, 23).

Maina always refers to himself as the brains whereas Meja is the hands. It is Meja who works as a rock-breaker in a quarry; in the meantime, Maina was setting an elaborate form of racket. Instead of merely imitating the members of the Razors' gang he had just joined, and who are not sophisticated thieves, he tells the Razor, their gang leader, that he will require a file, some paper and a pen. Not like the first time where he played the ordinary pickpocket, this time "It is nothing that primitive,' he said. 'It's something modern. Something totally new. Something which, if it comes, will pay a hundred, two hundred times what it costs."(78). As one of the gang proposes to help him, he refuses flatly saying that this time it real, respectable business that "needs personality and intelligence, two things I am sure you have never heard of. You would only mess up things. No my son.'[...] 'You stay right here and try to grow up her,' he pointed at his head. 'Papa Maina will work for you.'(Kill Me Quick, 84).

The same kind of hierarchy governs the relationship between the two buddies of Going Down River Road. Ocholla admires Ben. For him, success had been within Ben's reach, had the mortar business been successful. Whereas Ocholla's future looks rather bleak, he now contemplates better prospects as he gets associated with Ben. Throughout the novel, he is shown relying on Ben for advice, and also for the simple reason that the latter knows better; after all he had been an army lieutenant.

The description suggests that they are both alike and unlike each other and, therefore, there is good reason to believe that Ocholla represents Ben's double in this novel. To begin with, Ocholla acts as the positive double of the central figure. From the start it is stressed that both are good friends, buddies - Ocholla is referred to as "The buddy who buys me *Karara* all those nights I get home plastered"(River Road, 62). During the course of the novel it is significant that Ben has no relationship with

anybody else on the construction site except for Ocholla. The other hands on the construction site see them as being identical: "No one gives a thought to Ben. Him and Ocholla are pariahs. No goods from no place. No one understands them. Not Yussuf, not Bhai, nobody at all understands them."(92). The description also stresses the fact that their outlook is the same and what Ben says of his buddy equally applies to himself: "Bastard! But Ocholla is a nice kind of bastard. He may be too ragged, wears open-mouthed shoes that frustrate Ben, and dons a ridiculous fireman's cap, gets violent and calls his wives bitches when they are not there, but Ocholla is a fine buddy. Even though he never offers a cigarette."(River Road, 65).

From the beginning we see that Ocholla is the only person to know about Ben's past. In chapters three and four, Ben explains to Ocholla why Onesmus is his enemy. As he recounts how he was sacked from the army after being involved in an illegal transaction of which Onesmus was part, Ocholla shows real concern for Ben's safety and he is continually advising him: 'He will kill you, Ben '(54). Though Ocholla keeps advising him to beware of Onesmus, for Ben

> There is no question of giving up his job to get away from the vengeful drunk driver. He need[s] money real bad now that Wini has agreed to marry him if they can raise enough money for some sort of wedding. Besides she says she wants him to be like other men. She is going to help him get back on his feet. She will try and get Johnny, her boss, to give him a clerical job at the Messrs Smith and Jones Company. It will be good to get out of the mire at the bottom of the social scale, but he must stick [to] his construction site job until this plan materializes. He will miss his buddy Ocholla when he leaves. Maybe Wini can get them both jobs in the offices. He will ask her about this. (River Road, 54)

Ocholla's advice seems to be a manifestation of his friendship: "You know, Ben [...] It's not right a guy advising his buddy, I mean it all sounds unreal and all that, me telling you what to do. We have been buddies for close two years now and you are brighter than I am, more educated [...] If that madman was after me I'd have shit scared out of me. I am already frightened."(97).

As Ocholla urges him to do something about the murderous Onesmus, we understand that Ocholla and Ben identify with each other. It is not surprising therefore that when the loaded crane bucket accidentally falls on the lorry's cockpit and kills Onesmus, Ben quite rightly thinks that his buddy has done the job for him. As he climbs up in the crane's cockpit to thank him, Ocholla pleadingly says it was an accident:

> 'I am not a very brave man, Ben. You know that. I was scared stiff of him, and he was not even mad at me. It was you he was after. You are a brave man, Ben. If ... if it was me he was after, you know, I have already told you. It would have scared

> the shit out of me! [...] I don't know why I did it. It was madness, madness, Ben. [...]He killed three people,' Ocholla goes on. 'He hated you. The son of a bitch was going to kill you.'(River Road, 152)

This episode is quite significant in so far as it illustrates the process whereby one character thinks that he identifies totally with another one. In this particular case, Ben's hatred for Onesmus is shared by Ocholla and, at times, it even seems that Ocholla is more motivated than Ben. When he accidentally kills him, Ben feels obliged to thank him. As they both sit in the crane's cockpit, they share their last cigarette as a gesture of reinforced friendship.

The two buddies also share the same disillusionment with politics. While the workers at lunch break listen to Machore debating current issues in his workers' parliament, Ben and Ocholla stand apart. Their buddies relationship however seems to have its own limitations. As Ben is kicked out by Wini's landlord he goes to Ocholla for refuge. The reaction of the latter however indicates that this is trespassing the limits of friendship:

> Ocholla remains unconvinced. It is one thing being buddies, drinking together, talking, eating, and even more recently sharing a cigarette end. It is quite another thing sharing a shanty hut, the absolute possession, the retreat of the vanquished heart. It is one thing asking your buddy to buy you a drink, lend you some money. But it is quite another matter forcing him to smile at you and invite you to his last morsel, the bit he will not share with his wives and children. This is betrayal of companionship, exploitation of your buddy. Bud-exploitation.(River Road, 163).

After a while, when Ocholla's family arrives to stay with him, the two buddies quarrel seriously as Ben suggests Ocholla sends his wives back home. In so ignoring the kind of duties which his friend is subject to, Ben proves that he is more an urban than a communal man. This concept is developed by Angus Calder who sees in Mwangi's focal figures the representation of loners among whom exists a 'buddy' relationship *instead of* a wider one: "Ben and Ocholla stand aloof from the political discussions of their fellow building-site workers. Ocholla's family (the focus of their quarrel) is seen by Ben as a rival for his buddy's attention and affection. Society, it seems, can 'go to hell', so long as buddies drink and laugh together." (Calder, 1984, 187). In the opinion of Calder, this type of character is characteristic of an archetype which he calls the 'Mwangian Man'. In a comparison between Going Down River Road and The Cockroach Dance, he says of the main focal figures that

> the traits they have in common might be called those of 'Mwangian Man'. Both are, of course, loners, without family

> ties. Both of them are urbanized through and through, without roots in the land and - this is a point which needs stressing - without any 'tribal' feeling. While Ben's 'buddy' friendship with a Luo makes the point without comment, Dusman explicitly refuses to reveal his tribal origin to the police. 'Haven't you guys ever heard of an urban African? I am one. (Calder, 1894, 189).

The existence of doubles in Kill Me Quick and Going Down River Road is perhaps justified by the hostility of the social environment. As a newcomer to the city, the young one needs to be supervised by a tutor, or by someone who is more experienced than him.

A similar relationship also exists in The Wanderers where the narrative structure is organised in a way that suggests the existence of a double in the person of Steven Cartwright. Timi is in charge of the narration in book one and, with his departure that coincides with the end of book one and the beginning of book two, the narrator's role passes to Steven Cartwright. The latter however is not the only double of Timi Tabane; we can make a distinction between his positive doubles among which we can group Steven Cartwright, Emil, and Awoonor, and the negative doubles that include Diliza, and also the other exiles Timi later meets in Iboyoru.

As Steven Cartwright indicates from the beginning of book two, Timi is his twin: "I think he represented one side of me - the side which I never wanted to acknowledge"(The Wanderers, 130), although he is pointing to the differences in personality that exist between himself and Timi. In so doing, he shows that he lacks the commitment of Timi who is not satisfied with journalism:

> several times I have tried to dissociate myself from it all. But then I said to myself Steven Cartwright, you're white, you live in a segregated area, you eat, you sleep, you breathe, you mate white, you're privileged, you're doomed with the rest of your race. At other times I've said to myself, What the hell! I'm not responsible for the sins of my fathers and of my tribe, why should Steven Cartwright be made responsible for the wickedness unleashed by a government of white thugs, of Nazi-headed hoodlums who hate black, Indian, Jew and mulatto? And what are you doing about it Steven Cartwright? Why should I feel I must join a political movement? [...] But you're not altogether free of guilt. (The Wanderers, 119-20)

But although he appears to have traits that are absent in Timi we come to witness the gradual change that takes place in him as he becomes aware that he should take sides.

The various indicators that show his likeness to Timi are to be found in the details of their respective careers, their respective disillusionment with journalism, their being in love with the same woman, and their common exile, though Steven's is chosen and Timi's is not. Steven says he opted for journalism because he refused to practice engineering. That was a conscious choice he says and well accepted. He does not regret it even though he knows that as an engineer he would have earned twice as much and would have had better prospects for an executive position. This is not the case for Timi who comes to journalism because he was sick with teaching in high school. To him, when he decided to leave teaching, journalism appeared as the only acceptable occupation to make a living, and thus describes it as a second love, therefore indicating that he was not totally happy with it.

But although Steven Cartwright seems to be more attracted by journalism than Timi, he nevertheless starts having serious doubts about the wisdom of his choice, especially in the South African context. It is true he says, that I like journalism, because it fulfils a creative urge,

> But what do you do when the big bullies in the government harass you through their secret police? [...]
> Another question: What do you do when you realize that you're operating a paper for only a segment of the nation - for non whites, because some of their interests, their yearnings, aspirations, hopes and fears, their music, their politics, their economics, their lives as individuals and as communities are segregated; because they make up a separate ghetto of the human drama? [...] If one accepts, as I do, that politics are an expression of people's yearnings and hopes and fears and therefore a vital part of communal life, how can we justify our avoidance of them and our nibbling at the edge of political life? (The Wanderers, 130-1)

The questions Steven Cartwright raises here correspond exactly to what Diliza reproaches *Bongo* magazine, and indirectly Timi. To Diliza, *Bongo* is only writing stories for the rising middle class. As he tells Timi, "It's precisely the educated who think they require that stuff you write - for their week end reading - on the veranda while Mama waters the flowers"(113). To him, "Until a strong nationalist paper is established, a paper round which the masses can rally, all else is futile, a waste of time and money and can even be poisonous"(The Wanderers, 114).

Steven Cartwright, like Timi, is aware of the ambiguity of his situation. He understands that if he is incapable of action, it is because he is unable to overcome his fear, a fear that is shared by the group of white journalists :

> Don is afraid, I'm afraid, so is Gideon - all of us whites. But why should we be, our bosses in the government say as long as we obey the law and to hell with our consciences? The

> bosses are also afraid because they know they have created the conditions for agitation. And so they grow tougher. Fear. The radical white man who goes to the torture cells, who is placed under house arrest, who is serving life sentence on Robben Island - those people have to a large extent overcome their fear. We who still operate our media of communication after *New Age, Fighting Talk, Torch,* have been banned because of their resistance politics are afraid to endure the same fate. Fear. So many whites have a liberal disposition and want equality for all and know they would find greater security in a nonracial society. But they are afraid. Afraid that they may be following a false signal, afraid of physically pitting their liberal ideas against fascism, against power....(The Wanderers, 131-132)

This "bad conscience" feeling is shared by Timi who has the sense that he is turning in circles. Despite the success of the Rampa story which contributed to the release of several prisoners, Timi is still feeling awkward. As Steven reports, "First class job he did of that Naledi story. Surprised himself, too. Even Pan praised it. Had a superior attitude towards journalists in general. Felt he was prostituting himself"(122). However despite the encouragement represented by this temporary success, he feels despair overwhelming him, especially after waiting so long for his passport that did not come. As Steve admits, "it was no use assigning important stories to Timi. He simply did not have any steam or enthusiasm left in him"(137).

Beyond this fear however emerges the expression of a certain unhappiness with the occupation of journalist in a racial society. The response Steven Cartwright adopts is a personal one. He mixes with multiracial groups, and finally falls in love with a black woman, Naledi.

In the second section of book two Steven Cartwright recounts how, during the weekend, he attends a party in the African complex - the ghetto - with other whites and blacks before they are interrupted by an approaching police patrol and are obliged to disperse. This party, which groups a number of intellectuals of both colours, is the occasion for him to reflect on the helplessness of the intellectual's situation. He says :

> Mozart within, screaming and buzzing outside ... the enlightened creating an enclave where they can talk, bruise themselves and one another while seeking a clue to their lives, their eventual destiny in a benighted country. They will talk and hurt themselves, but their minds always chafe and thrust forward and turn in circles....(The Wanderers,138)

In so mixing with black intellectuals, it is suggested that Steven shares with them the feeling of living in a stifling atmosphere. As he suggests by his feeling of being caught in endless circles, there is no choice left but

exile. To Timi, the only way out is exile. And to Steve one way out of the circle is his being involved with Naledi, secretly defying the law by living with her, although he can do it only when both of them go abroad. As he says in a formula that sums up his position as regards the race question,

> I can slum because I want the real basic and expressive companionship which the slum affords in plenty. Yet I couldn't live in a slum; because it *is* a slum.
> Cutting across all those disparities are one's dreams. My sex dreams involve Negro and mulatto women, territory forbidden by the law in real life.(The Wanderers, 120)

For the moment, the idea is still in Steven's mind, and this secret love for Naledi and his awareness of breaking race regulations are reflected in his dream:

> It's here in my flat. I take her by the arms and press her to me: 'Naledi, I love I love you,' I say. 'Come to me come to me.' Her muscles relax and the soft warmth from her bosom passes into me and the undulating waves break on the shore and she struggles to be free and she lets out a cry. When the waves recede I hear a knock on the door and a hard and gruff voice breaks through: *Open! Police!*
> 'Breakfast is ready, sir,' Nora announces, at the door where the police should be. (The Wanderers, 134)

As is revealed by this passage, Steven is definitely in love with Naledi and so is Timi; at least he feels strongly drawn to her. As they are in Shuping's house in Goshen, Timi confesses he "thought much about Naledi as a woman. I did not think so much about her lost husband as her womanhood; her womanhood that lay fallow"(The Wanderers,78). He eventually tries to kiss her while she is asleep but only manages to wake her up by inadvertently hitting a lamp on the glass chimney. When he sees Naledi again some five years later in Iboyoru in the company of Steven, whom she has decided to marry, his description of her is not void of feeling:

> Naledi. What five years can do to a person! Timi thought. Five years since Goshen. This was not the timid-looking, withdrawn, and artless Naledi they had known. She had poise and a sureness of speech and gesture. The eyes were no longer pools of grief. They looked out and projected a firmness of character, a refusal to prostrate before the bulldozer.(The Wanderers, 222)

In this description as in the following one the looker identifies with the person described :

> That night at the hotel my thoughts were full of Naledi.[...] A mysterious transformation had taken place in her. Her near-humble artlessness had gone. Her eyes bore the marks of suffering, but they were undaunted, even in a sad stoic manner.[...] Earlier life had merely brought things upon her head. Here she was visibly in control of her surroundings. It gave her poise. I knew at once that nobody, nothing was ever

> going to defile the quality of her endurance or break her will to live. There was a challenge in those eyes, she looked lovely. (The Wanderers, 155)

After a year in Iboyoru, Timi receives a phone call from Steven telling him he's going to fetch Naledi from Botswana, he understands that there is something going on between them. And when Steven tells him they are going to marry it is not incidental if Timi tells Karabo: "Anyhow, Steve's a fine fellow, so's Naledi a real nice woman. Can't help feeling she's the kind of woman I'd have married if I'd not married you."(196).

In love with the same woman, sharing an identical disillusionment as concerns their respective careers in journalism while working with *Bongo* magazine after giving up promising careers, Steven and Timi both end up in exile, Steven choosing exile because his union with Naledi would be illegal in South Africa.

Timi and Steven are seen to have left their respective countries because they wanted to fulfill a creative urge and because the conditions back home were by far too stultifying. It is the same reasons that have driven Emil and his compatriot Irmelin out of Austria. When asked if they were ever considering a future return home, Emil replies that there is no creativity left at home: "There is more vitality outside Austria"(302); he is like Irmelin who "had found the satisfaction and self-fulfilment in Iboyoru which she had failed to attain in Austria."(235).

Both Timi and Emil are committed in that they are concerned in improving the life of the African, and both of them end up in exile. When they meet in Kambani, Lao Kiku, Emil has become a wandering exile for whom it is no longer possible to stay in Iboyoru because of the personal commitments he has developed with a tribe that is now under threat.

Emil is the one who acts as kind of mentor to Timi. Emil was the one who advised him on his relationship with Miss Graves and Olun Bakare for example, and who helped him get his job in the English department because for him it was important to have an African lecturer. As we have also seen Timi, Emil, and also Awoonor share the same concern towards the conservation of African characteristics. Emil has already produced an operetta which was based on the Ijaw creation myth and in which he makes striking use of West African masks. Therefore he is seen to act more like an African than as a white expatriate. In fact, as Timi remarks, he was of the kind that refused to be integrated into the white expatriates' group.

There is in Timi a similar refusal to adopt group behaviour. Though he is in contact with the other South African expatriates in Iboyoru, he makes it clear that he does not approve of their behaviour, therefore making them his

negative doubles. His relationship to them can be read in the lengthy and ironic descriptions he gives of some of them :

> There were about thirty exiles from South Africa teaching high school in Iboyoru and elsewhere in West Africa. They were a strange miscellany when Timi came to think of it. Some like him had left South Africa without passports; some had come out legally, with passports, and then had been prohibited from returning. There were also adventure seekers who intended eventually to return home. These had the reputation in the community in which they worked and in the towns they visited for a spree on weekends for being notoriously gay. They drank and fought, most often among themselves.(The Wanderers, 242-3)

He then makes a list of them: Holeng, the comic, Fikile, the avaricious, Shongwane, Debe... Each of them being notorious for some kind of anti-social behaviour. The distance Timi puts between himself and these expatriates is noticeable in the slight touch of irony behind his description, implying therefore that he is different.

Diliza is also another character with whom Timi does not agree but who nonetheless represents one side of him. Their ground of conflict is purely ideological. Although it is Diliza who had influenced Timi to take up Rampa's case, he is the first to question the efficacy of this middle class type of journalism. To begin with, we learn that he does not think much of *Bongo* magazine; he has been quite contemptuous of its recent exposes which according to him are of no political value. To Timi, Diliza is a pompous fellow who had an irritating "way of unsettling one with his brilliant intellect" (The Wanderers, 17). Although both of them are black intellectuals, Diliza claims to be more nationalist than Timi. He can be understood as representing the other challenging self of Timi

> Something about him earlier in the evening had made me feel that he was challenging me to it. There, Timi, he seemed to say, let's see if you and *Bongo* and its editors will dare. He never ceased to say loud and bold. I am a nationalist to the marrow. And his beard was as menacing as the derisive twist of his mouth at times like this. And yet he never joined a political movement.(The Wanderers, 22)

But although the two do not get along well and often quarrel on ideological matters, they nevertheless represent the two sides of the same coin; witness for instance what Timi says after his last and serious quarrel with Diliza :

> After this, Diliza and I avoided each other whenever we could. Much as I tried to tone down my growing resentment to his manner, I kept hearing in the back of my mind the bell he had once sounded. He had said to me that his tribe had inspired the great heroes in the early days of wars between blacks and whites; that indeed this heroism had inspired other tribes that had been less aggressive.(The Wanderers, 115)

This phenomenon of attraction/repulsion that exists between Timi Tabane and some of his doubles also governs the relationship between Mihaimid and Mustafa Sa'eed in Season of Migration to the North. On their first encounter both Mustafa Sa'eed and the narrator feel they have something in common. Each one of them sees the other as a kind of twin, or a literary double. This is why on the one hand, Mustafa Sa'eed progressively discloses to him aspects of his life which he has kept secret so far. On the other hand, if the narrator is attracted by the mystery surrounding Mustafa Sa'eed, the former conducts a careful inquiry into the stranger's life. This inquiry seems to find its justification in the narrator feeling that the place he expected, and was expected to hold in the village, has been somehow taken by this Mustafa Sa'eed. This theme, which I have called a role reversal between insider and outsider, is part of a more complex relationship between narrator and hero.

However, the narrative mode in Season of Migration to the North often throws confusion in the narrative. And when the protagonist is said to be wandering across the world, it is difficult to know whether it is the narrator or the hero (Mustafa Sa'eed) who is subject to this vagabondage. During one of his regular journeys from the village to Khartoum, the narrator describes his voyage in terms which reproduce the almost exact replica of the peregrinations of Mustafa Sa'eed. Witness for instance this passage where the narrator says he has the feeling of being "in a long caravan that ascends and descends, encamps, and then proceeds on its way, (travelling in) the wilderness sweeping out before (them) like shoreless seas"(61). But this imagined caravan gives way to a real one following a "road (which) is unending and (under) the sun (which is) merciless"(119), on board a lorry, and where the passengers form the members of a nomad caravan and lead for the night, the life of real bedouins. As has often been underlined elsewhere in the novel the narrator's mind is obsessed by the phantom of Mustafa Sa'eed. As he says on his arrival to Khartoum "... the phantom of Mustafa Sa'eed appeared to me less than a month after my conversation with the retired Mamur, like a genie who has been released from his prison and will continue thereafter to whisper in men's ears"(55).

The parallel between the hero and the narrator is again taken further. It is not only said that their success was fake, but also that they did not achieve anything practical or useful, and that they even had provoked catastrophes while acting as outsiders. We have seen how, on the one hand, Mustafa Sa'eed was seen as a plague which had caused death and suicide in London, and how his sudden death had upset the natural order of things in that village of the Nile "where no one ever kills anyone" by causing Wad Rayyes's murder by the widowed Hosna who later committed suicide. On the

other hand, the narrator is equally and indirectly responsible for the same crimes in the village because of his refusal to take Hosna as a second wife.

Not only has Mihaimid behaved as a true outsider by not understanding and complying with local customs, but he has disappointed his kinsmen as well. On his arrival for instance, Mustafa Sa'eed does not hesitate to tell him that a doctorate in poetry is of no use to the farmers of the Nile; medicine or agriculture, he says, would have been a much more useful qualification. Just like Mustafa Sa'eed's own specialization in economics which has not served his country's needs at all. In fact, for a 'been-to' of his stature, he could have been Mamur or Minister in an independent Sudan. The narrator also acknowledges that despite his qualification, he is only a civil servant of no consequence, less influential than the almost illiterate Mahjoub whom he sees as one of the "legal heirs of authority"(99).

The literary pair Mihaimid/Mahjoub is not without similarities to the pair Samba Diallo/ Demba in L'Aventure Ambiguë. Samba Diallo and Mihaimid are both genuine sons of the land who, while returning from abroad, are expected to occupy key positions in the country. However they both are unable to play their role, and because they no longer understand their own people, are not exceptional beings and become real outsiders. Their place is taken by other people who were not expected to do so. In the case of L'Aventure Ambiguë, Demba, instead of being sent overseas, continues his classes at the traditional school. Despite his plebeian origin he succeeds Thierno to the function of spiritual leader of the Diallobé. He therefore takes the place which had been reserved for Samba Diallo:

> Il est bon que ce jeune homme remplace le maître," se félicita la Grande Royale... "Il a le même âge que ce jeune homme que l'on vient de faire maître des Diallobé. Je l'eusse nommé chef des Diallobé, à ma place, à moins que le maître ne l'eût choisi pour porter son turban."(L'Aventure, 133)
> [The Most Royal Lady expressed her satisfaction: "It is well that this young man should replace the teacher." (while the Chief of the Diallobé, thinking of Samba Diallo, says) "He is of the same age as this young man who has just been made chief of the Diallobé. I would have made him chief of the Diallobé in my place, unless the teacher had chosen him to wear his turban"(Woods, 121)]

Demba, as the new spiritual leader, becomes more influential and more useful to his people than Samba. Witness for example his decision to change the timetable of the Koranic school so that the Diallobé children can attend both the white and the traditional classes, in contrast to the constant hesitation of Samba. Mahjoub is equally said to be more useful than the narrator. While the latter holds an ineffectual job in Khartoum, the

former takes part in every important issue that relates to the welfare of the village.

For the reasons listed above, narrator and hero act as doubles to each other. As has been underlined earlier, this duality can also be traced in other novels studied earlier in this chapter. Samba Diallo, as we have seen, is the unsuccessful double of Demba who has risen himself to the status of the spiritual guide of the Diallobé. Raus in Les Boucs is the exact replica of Yalann Waldik, so much so that the former tells the latter: "tu es un Bicot et j'en suis un, même sac même contenu, avec une telle force de préjugés que Simone elle-même ne s'apercevrait pas de la différence, si par exemple un soir je prenais ta place dans le lit" (Les Boucs, 51) ["You're an Arabo and so am I. Same bag , same contents, so much alike that even Simone wouldn't know the difference if I took your place in bed some night." (Harter, 34)]. Another case of the doubling of characters is also to be found in Ayi Kwei Armah's Fragments where Brempong stands for what Baako should have become in the eyes of his family.

The general impression the reader is left with after a reading of Season is that the character of Mustafa Sa'eed represents the negative double of Mihaimid. In accordance with the 'psychological line of investigation' that Muhammad Siddiq applies to the novel it is clear that "all characters (have to be) considered as projections of... the narrator's unconscious and all the events as having been enacted within his own psyche as latent potentialities"(Siddiq, 1978, 85). But because Salih has multiplied the thematic, structural and stylistic correspondences that suggest that Mustafa Sa'eed is the narrator's double or alter ego, many critics have seen in it the expression of a literary double.

Kambal for instance maintains that "the issue is further complicated by the role of the narrator who acts in some respects as the hero's 'double' in adjusting the focus and perspective of the novel" (Kambal, 1984, 304). But, as both Siddiq and Allen suggest, this is implied in one relevant passage from the novel. According to Allen, Salih

> manages to sprinkle into the various sections (of the novel) a certain number of clues which call into question the separation that can be made on a purely realistic level between the characters of Mustafa Sa'eed and the narrator. The link between the two is suggested in early parts of the novel, but the reader finds himself confronted by it when the narrator finally enters Mustafa Sa'eed's study. (Allen, 1982, 135)

The passage referred to is the following:

> I turned the key in the door, which opened without difficulty. I was met by dampness and an odour like that of an old memory. I know this smell: the smell of sandalwood and incense. I felt my way with my finger-tips along the wall and came up against a window pane. I threw open the window and the wooden shutters. I opened a second window and a third, but all that came in from outside was more darkness. I struck a match. The light exploded on my eyes and out of the darkness there emerged a frowning face with pursed lips that I knew but could not place. I moved towards it with hate in my heart. It was my adversary Mustafa Sa'eed. The face grew a neck, then a trunk and two legs, and I found myself standing face to face with myself. This is not Mustafa Sa'eed - it's a picture of me frowning at my face from a mirror. (Season, 135, emphasis mine)

Therefore, although they seem to be antonymous, the two itineraries constitute the two sides of the same coin. This can be substantiated by various examples from the text. When Mihaimid arrives at Wad Hamid he notices that Mustafa Sa'eed plays the role of the insider and treats him as an outsider. The narrator, who is a 'been-to' returned home, should be, according to the popular belief, a sort of charmed man, someone of exceptional quality, but instead, he is shown to be only like any ordinary man in the village. Mustafa Sa'eed, on the contrary, claims to be an ordinary man who gave up his business in Khartoum in order to settle in this village and become a farmer. But beyond the public image it is he who proves to be an exceptional man. Moreover, he who was expected to be a true insider becomes an almost total outsider and vice-versa.

On his arrival at Wad Hamid, Mihaimid notices how well integrated Mustafa Sa'eed is in the community. Not only has he married a girl from the village, but he has made himself indispensable as well. His contribution to the Agricultural Project Committee is much appreciated and has won him the respect of the whole population of Wad Hamid. This is why he is able to treat the newly-arrived 'been-to' with condescension. On their first meeting Mustafa Sa'eed tells Mihaimid he should have studied something more useful than poetry, something like agriculture, engineering or medicine. At which the narrator is outraged and feels the existence of a gap between the role he expected and was expected to play and the reality. He says: "I was furious- I won't disguise the fact from you... Look at the way he says we and doesn't even include me, although he knows that this is my village and that it is he - not I - who is the stranger"(9).

By criticizing and minimizing the importance of Mihaimid's academic achievements Mustafa Sa'eed implies that he is more successful than him, more useful to the village people. As Muhammad Siddiq indicates,

> While Mustafa Sa'eed is deeply involved in local agriculture and the development of the economic life of the village the narrator leads a meaningless and nomadic existence, first as a teacher of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry in secondary school (after receiving his Ph.D. in English literature!) then as an ineffectual inspector of elementary education. (Siddiq, 1978, 86)

In fact the narrator feels that his place in the village has been usurped by Mustafa Sa'eed. The latter is much admired by the narrator's grandfather Hajj Ahmed and by Mahmoud for whom "Mustafa's a deep one". While it is said that Mustafa has become a full member of the village, the narrator is shown to have opposite characteristics. After the death of Mustafa Sa'eed, and as the guardian of the widow and the children, he is invited by Wad Rayyes who wants to marry Hosna Bint Mahmoud. Although everyone in the village knows that there is nothing shocking in such a custom, the narrator is revolted. In the narrator's mind and because he has changed, the environment should also have changed accordingly. So when Mahmoud suggests he takes Hosna Bint Mahmoud as a second wife he is shocked, although in his inner self he admits that "in one form or another I was in love with Hosna Bint Mahmoud, the widow of Mustafa Sa'eed, and that I- like Wad Rayyes and millions of others- was not immune from the germ of contagion that oozes from the body of the universe" (104). Words such as' immune' and 'contagion' suggest that the narrator not only disagrees with the prevailing customs but that he is not the exceptional man he thought he has become. His doctorate and his studies abroad have not changed him. Therefore he admits that he is simply like all the other members of the village.

While Mihaimid was away in England, Mustafa Sa'eed helped organize the Agricultural Project Committee and therefore provided the farmers of the village better expectations. As Mahjoub tells the narrator,

> he gave us invaluable help in organizing the Project... Today the Project owns ten lorries that bring us supplies every other day direct from Khartoum and Omdurman... The Omda and the merchants absolutely loathed him because he opened up the villagers' eyes and spoiled things for them. (Season, 101).

Although the narrator and Mustafa are represented in antonymous terms, there is yet another link between them. Mustafa stands as the literary double of the narrator. Both of them are 'been-to's' educated in England; as a consequence they share the same codewords and cultural references. While browsing through the titles on the bookshelves in Mustafa's reading room the narrator feels at home for he is among familiar titles and writings. In another instance where Mustafa recited poetry, the narrator remarks: "I

heard him reciting English poetry in a clear voice and with an impeccable accent. It was a poem which I later found in an anthology of poetry about the First World War"(14). It is therefore not surprising that he becomes Mustafa's confidant. The latter tells him about his life, about things no one in the village has ever heard of before. And naturally, after the death of Mustafa, a letter he has left unsurprisingly tells the narrator: "I leave my wife, two sons and all my worldly goods in your care, knowing that you will act honourably in every respect"(65). In other words, the narrator is expected to act as a twin, just like the dead Mustafa himself would have done during his lifetime. But the process whereby the identification between the two characters takes place seems to go further. Not only, as we have seen, is the narrator in charge of the widowed Hosna Bint Mahmoud and her children, but he soon discovers that he is in love with her as well (if he is not again secretly in love, at another level, with the various English mistresses of Mustafa, or simply jealous of his love adventures). Adoptive father of the children, secret lover of the widow, he is also the only privileged person to have access to the private study in which the dead man kept his life secrets. This identification climaxes further in a significant episode of the last chapter. While the narrator is swimming in the Nile river, he feels something which is similar to vagabondage and an uncontrollable desire to go North :

> I continued swimming and swimming, resolved to make the Northern shore... Then it was as if I were in a vast echoing hall. The shore rose and fell. The reverberation of the river faded and overflowed. In front of me I saw things I in a semicircle. Then I veered between seeing and blindness. I was conscious and not conscious. Was I asleep or awake? Was I dead or alive?... Then my mind cleared and my relationship to the river was determined. Though floating on the water, I was not part of it. I thought that if I died at that moment, I would have died as I was born-without any volition of mine.(176-168).

Whether this episode is real or not is of no relevance to our purpose. But it is worth noting that it constitutes a kind of psychological reconstruction of the death of Mustafa Sa'eed who was drowned in the Nile.

As has been mentioned earlier, what has happened to Mustafa could have equally happened to the narrator[11]. And the similarities between them are numerous. Their studies are useless and have an almost negative outcome: "Poor Mustafa Sa'eed. He was supposed to make his mark in the world of Commissioners and Mamurs, yet he hadn't found himself a grave to rest his body in, in this land that stretches a million square miles"(54).

Instead of leading a successful career either in the Civil Service or in executive posts with the government, Mustafa Sa'eed has ended up as a farmer, in a poor village on the Nile. Mustafa's actual situation is contrasted with what his former schoolmates think he must be. As mentioned by a young university lecturer in Khartoum who recalls him, it is "funny that no one remembers him... He's now a millionaire living like a lord in the English countryside"(56), while the narrator, in his own words, is only a civil servant working for the Department of Education in Khartoum. When he compares himself to Mahmoud who is now an influential figure in the area, he tells him:

> It's you who have succeeded, not I... because you influence actual life in the country. We civil servants, though, are of no consequence. People like you are the legal heirs of authority; you are the sinews of life, you're the salt of the earth. (Season, 99).

This is shown to contrast strongly with the childhood of both the narrator and the hero. Mustafa is said to have been the brightest boy in his generation, the first Sudanese ever to be sent abroad for further studies. In a similar way, the narrator tells us how he has a rather high opinion of himself and how "(he) used to regard (himself) as the outstanding young man in the village". Both of them also later behaved in a way which provoked equal catastrophes. Mustafa's life was accompanied by suicide and murder. And his widow's killing both Wad Rayyes and herself was not only provoked by his death but also by the narrator's attitude since, if he had agreed to marry her, he would have avoided such a tragic ending.

From an apparent role reversal between insider and outsider, the relationship between narrator and hero has moved to a complete identification between the two. This process however stops momentarily when the narrator reconstitutes the overseas part of the life of Mustafa Sa'eed, although the former could have had identical experiences abroad. Again the parallel between the past failure of Mustafa Sa'eed and the present failure of the narrator is worth noticing.

It is also failure and success that provide the link between Obi Okonkwo and his doubles. Although Joseph is much older than Obi, he is presented as being his "countryman," someone from Umuofia. As we are told, they "had been classmates at the Umuofia CMS Central School"(No Longer, 14). This is why they are able to recall their school days during which their class teacher, Mr. Anene, "used to say that (Obi) would go to England"(36). Their alikeness however stops here, and one has to look elsewhere in the novel in order to find a positive double in the character of Christopher, another friend of Obi's who "was an economist from the London School of Economics"(20). The similarities again stop here for Christopher will be shown to bear features that are absent in Obi.

As can be noticed whenever they start discussing current issues such as Nigeria's future "... whichever line Obi took, Christopher had to take the opposite... and he always pointed out that Obi's arguments were not based on actual or scientific analysis since he had taken a degree in English."(20). Therefore they often disagree on matters such as the ideal attitude to the phenomenon of bribery, or the freedom of the individual to marry a person of one's choice. As Christopher reminds him regarding his choice to marry Clara, "You may think that I am not broad-minded, but I don't think we have reached the stage where we can ignore all our customs. You may talk about education and so on, but I am not going to marry an *osu*.(144)."

An identical objection is formulated by his "bushman" friend Joseph who advises him against marrying Clara and tells him: "Look at me... You know book, but this is no matter from book. Do you know what an *osu* is? But how can you know?" (71). Joseph is thus shown to represent the voice of wisdom, the awareness of the exigencies of traditions, as opposed to the impulsive Obi who tends to be self-willed. As often suggested by Joseph, "you know book more than I, but I am older than you"(40). Therefore, when for instance Obi wants to leave the hotel room paid for by the Umuofia Progressive Union on his arrival and share Joseph's room, the latter reminds him that this might create a bad impression: "what will the people of other towns say when they hear that a son of Umuofia returned from England and shared a room in Obalende?"(36).

When Joseph presents Obi as "That na my brother. Just return from overseas. B.A. (Honours) Classics"(77) he not only insists on their relationship but on the differences that stand between them. While Joseph, who is getting married, is expected to pay a bride-price of a hundred and fifty pounds, Obi is told that "they will probably ask you to pay five hundred, seeing that you are in the senior service"(41). The former is only a second-class clerk: "Joseph had not gone on to a secondary school because

he was too old and his parents were poor. He had joined the Education Corps of the 82nd Division and, when the war ended, the clerical service of the Nigerian government.(14).

During their school period, Joseph did not have any remarkable achievements whereas he reminds Obi that "at the end of every term you were at the top of the class. You remember we used to call you 'Dictionary'?"(36).

On Obi's return from England, we notice that he lives in the European part of the city, Ikoyi, whereas his friend has a flat in the popular area of Obalende. Moreover Obi has a brand new car but Joseph has none. And it is in order to share in some of his lucky friend's prestige that Joseph insisted so much on Obi's picking him up for the Umuofia Progressive Union meeting:

> That was one reason why Joseph had looked forward to this particular meeting. He was going to share in the glory of the car. It was going to be a great occasion for the Umuofia Progressive Union when one of their sons arrived at their meeting in a pleasure-car. Joseph, as a close friend of Obi, would reflect some of the glory. (No Longer, 77-8).

The meeting however takes an unexpected turn for, as the President advises him to be careful about his relationship with Clara, "a girl of doubtful ancestry"(83), Obi rudely shouts at him and leaves the meeting, thus showing his reluctance to comply with the general rules set by the sons of Umuofia.

Joseph is the one who talks reason whenever Obi is out of mind. By telling him the implications of his acts, he reproduces the point of view of Obi's parents, and to some extent, he is at the origin of their reaction. Speaking about a very bad dream she had, Obi's mother tells him it was a premonition for "In the afternoon your father came in with a letter from Joseph to tell us that you were going to marry an *osu*"(135). Earlier on, during his first visit to his parents, it was under the pressure of Clara that he kept his love-affair secret. As he reflects, "why had she said he should not tell his parents about her yet?... He would have liked to tell his mother at least"(61).

Not only does Obi obey the pressure of his close friends, but their opposition to any decision of his is shown to reinforce his determination. After being advised by Joseph, for instance, against marrying Clara, "Obi felt better and more confident in his decision now that there was an opponent"(72), that is after Joseph told him that his mission-school upbringing and European education had made him a stranger in his country"(71-2). As he quite significantly recalls it he is like the reluctant child who needs to be forced in order to take his bath:

> In fact he had been waiting all the afternoon to complete the discussion they had suspended last night. Obi was not prepared to plunge headlong into it. He wanted to begin at the fringes as he used to do many years ago when he was confronted with a morning bath in the cold harmattan season.(No Longer, 73).

The expected conversation with Joseph is something Obi was looking forward to since this would not only help him see clearly where he stands but also force him into action. In other words he expects others to decide for him.

The same psychological process applies to his relationship with Christopher with whom he used to have heated arguments about the nature and morality of bribery. And although he was, at first, strongly opposed to it, it is significant that it is after this discussion that he accepts his first bribe. Although he is shocked by it, he nonetheless poses weak resistance to the proposal of the stranger who brings out a wad of notes from the front pocket of his *agbada*: "The wad of notes lay where he had placed it for the rest of the day and all night. Obi placed a newspaper over it and secured the door... He woke up with a start in the middle of the night and he did not go to sleep again for a long time afterwards." (No Longer, 168).

Psychologically speaking, Christopher can be seen as the one who decided to accept the bribe in place of Obi. Furthermore, the former is the one the latter goes to in a desperate move to get the address of a doctor to perform the abortion. This shows that Obi relies very heavily on his doubles to perform specific actions for which he does not feel strong enough. Therefore he remains, not an actor, but a passive character, a mere witness.

PART FOUR: CONSPECTUS AND PROSPECTUS

Chapter Nine

CHAPTER NINE

1. Recapitulation

The starting point of this study was the canvas of the voyage depicted in a number of African novels, and more precisely an idealised view of the successful voyage as implied by the reference to Ulysses' journey and successful return. Implicit in this view therefore is the possibility of failure, whenever the voyage would not yield the expected fruit, whenever the returned been-to did not behave as he was expected to do. As a consequence, the analysis has followed two main directions: one in which the central figures are properly seen as being of an exceptional stature, i.e. heroes, and another one in which they appear to be more ordinary, already bearing the traits of anti-heroes.

School achievements and the promises they hold as they enter adolescence are the main yardsticks that measure the degree of exceptionality of the heroes. As their future careers gradually take a more precise shape, they are seen to be, and some already view themselves as being, the conforming ones.

There is an identity of views between themselves and the group in so far as they have similar expectations. These hopes are again underlined when the hero goes overseas.

The one event that epitomises these expectations is the departure ceremony often held before the hero's going away. It is also in this occasion that the terms of the mission which he is assigned are formulated, thus foreshadowing the future degree of success or failure of the been-to on his subsequent return.

A criterion for the evaluation of this ritual is an examination of the range of attitudes as regards the phenomenon of the voyage. It was first regarded as a physically dangerous experience because the departing one was going to the land of the unknown. The experience related in Topographie for example is enough evidence to give credit to such beliefs. Sacrifices were made to ensure that the traveller would return safely. An example of this view is Kocoumbo l'étudiant noir in which, despite a few unexpected incidents during his stay in France, one can say that all is well that ends well. A more nuanced illustration is Season of Migration to the North in which there are two different cases: a narrator who is said to have felt the difference in physical terms - Britain was called the land of the cold; and a central figure who has not been marked physically, but whose mind has now become more Western than African. The popular apprehension of danger to the body gradually gives way to the certainty that the crossing could also

affect the soul of the person leaving.

A further analysis of these rituals shows that despite the fears that are attached to the idea of the voyage, the mission is clearly formulated. The departing one is reminded that it is the sacrifice of the entire group, of the "loved ones," that made his going away possible. He is told that his progress will be eagerly watched , and that the fruits of his stay overseas are expected to be shared with the ones left behind. As he is strongly advised not to be selfish, the idea that his journey is determined by the ultimate collective good and benefit, the initial fear of the journey to the unknown gives way to the expression of a certain enthusiasm for the voyage. This is true even when the voyage is internal, that is when it takes place within the continent, or even within one country.

There are two distinct reactions to the terms of this mission. They are determined by the standpoint, the "lieu d'énonciation" of the departing ones, and of the writers at large. The ones who write from within their community and who have a feeling of belonging to a harmonious ensemble are convinced of the completeness of the circle that sends them abroad/overseas and brings them back for the benefit of their people. They can proudly say "mission accomplished." This case has been illustrated by two novels only. The first case is an exceptional one. Ismail in The Saint's Lamp at first returns to Cairo totally transformed by his stay overseas. But this period of rejection of his parents' ways is a short-lived one and he quickly repents and decides to devote the rest of his life to help the poor. The other case is that of Kisimi Kamara in The African, who labours to shows how successful his return is, but the hypocritical lyrics of his behaviour nullifies the would-be genuine feeling of being a communal man.

The only ones who have a real feeling of belonging, who have this sense of community or tribe, are paradoxically the unsuccessful ones. Samba Diallo who was sincerely trying to understand the true nature of his ambiguous adventure, has come back a hybrid and is eventually killed. He was seen as a possible threat to the existing order, a traditional order which was already falling apart. The other ones, Said in Topographie and Yalann Waldik in Les Boucs, who are genuine economic emigrants, were not given the opportunity and time to accomplish their respective missions. One is killed even before he reaches his destination, and the other undergoes a slower but not less fatal process as he becomes, against his will, a pariah in a society that rejects him and his likes.

The truly communally-oriented ones, who work for the good of the community, are bound to be misunderstood. They are to be found in the few unconforming ones. But they are situated outwith the community. From the

beginning, they sense in the ritual some sort of dislocation. They have the feeling of becoming mere"factors" in the race of their people to acquire material welfare. They quickly disagree with the terms of the mission.

As they intuitively feel a deep incompatibility between their own ideals and the more immediate exigencies of their kin, they view their society as being in a fragmented state. To them, an original and truly communal myth has been corrupted. Hence the recurrence of images and symbols that convey the idea of an unfinished state of things. Themes such as putrefaction and abortion dominate the narratives in which the returned been-to is atypical.

The originally harmonious circle of departure, initiation, and return has given place to a distorted and aggressive one. The passage has become deadly, dangerous for the soul of the returned one who is unable to reconcile his inner duties with the exigencies of his public role. It is this state of psychological torment, this sense of fragmentation, that gives birth to the artificial, tormented, and circular structures of the novels. A recurrent metaphor is that of a closed circle, with no exit.

For the departing ones, the world they see is completely transformed. The original meaning and function of the basic elements are distorted. Water, which stands for purity, can no longer hold such a quality and, for the Man of The Beautyful Ones, his attempt to purify himself in the sea-water is an outright failure. Birth is also paradoxically assimilated with premature death, and it is the symbol of an eternal circle that has no end. For Baako in Fragments, the view of his newborn nephew provokes only sickness, a sickness felt as the idea of someone having to do the whole itinerary again. Such a sickness is also felt by Yalann Waldik when he advises the young Berber to be careful during his stay in France.

The rituals themselves are distorted. Instead of being beneficial ceremonies, they are seen to breed evil. The wind is equally ill-intentioned as it becomes hostile, and it represents a destructive rather than a regenerating force. The persons themselves lose their original names are are referred to as the Man, teacher, the suit, the madman, Raus, Yalann Waldik, or simply designated by the personal pronoun 'he'.

Among the atypical ones however, one has to distinguish between two different groups. On the one hand, they are the ones who are stranded in a country or a place that is not their own, and who are therefore quite unable to embark upon a reverse crossing. On the other, those who have returned home but who are marginalised because they see things from a standpoint that is not compatible with that of the majority. In the first group belong figures that are represented by such novelists as Mwangi, Mphahlele, Abrahams and Chraibi. The heroes of Chraibi are caught in a kind of Persian wheel, and there is indeed no hope for them to recover their lost self.

Abrahams also portrays outsiders in someone else's country. It is the case of Lanwood who, because he has lived so many years abroad, has become a total stranger to his native Africa, too Westernised to feel at home in Panafrica. To him, the word 'home' points in one direction: London. The cases illustrated by Mphahlele are of a different resonance. He is the African who feels a stranger in Africa. But this marginality is aggravated by the fact that he feels a stranger on both sides of the border: both in his own country, and in other African countries where he thought he would be able to find a common heritage to connect with other black people. A similar painful feeling is voiced by Modin in Why Are We So Blest; as he is unable to identify with the other black African students overseas, he recommends that the educated African undertake a reverse crossing, in order to get rid of the conditioning of which he has been the object during his stay abroad. This however is doomed to failure. In the Laccryville stopover, he meets Solo, another African intellectual who shares similar ideals but who has become a ghost-like figure unable to reach any form of useful work, not to speak of commitment. This takes an even further dramatic extension: as Modin symbolically goes south, in an allegory of a desert crossing, a *traversée* to recapture his lost self, he is captured by hostile French soldiers and is tortured in a manner that is no less symbolic. Beyond the shock of the evocation of his castration, the meaning resides in that he has been definitely deprived of all manhood, of all individuality.

What deprives the Mwangian man of his individuality, of his human values is a defeating socio-economic mechanism that is illustrated in Going Down River Road and Kill Me Quick. Unlike Chraibi's "boucs" for whom it is natural to feel excluded, the characters portrayed by Mwangi do not need to cross the border or the sea in order to feel outsiders and marginals. To them, the crossing takes place as they go from their village to the city, or simply within the limits of one city.

The trouble of the been-to lies not in his being an outsider in a foreign country, but in being unable to be an insider in his own. To what extent this is attributable to their stay in the West is difficult to assert. Their absorption of the more individualistic outlook of European cultures and also the whole intellectual, critical baggage of the West with its critical and sceptical viewpoint, are indeed part of the cause.

2. Outstanding Issues

a. Writers, Artists, and Outsiders.

On a fictional level, one striking fact is that "these artists for the most part either fill public roles themselves or relate very closely to

other characters who do so professionally."(Ayo, 1985, 515). Mamadu Ayo refers to artist figures in the novels of Armah but the statement also applies to figures in the other novels studied. Samba Diallo, Mujungu, Kisimi Kamara, and Udomo are all involved in politics or leadership; they are public men whose decisions affect great numbers. Ocran, Mihaimid, and Timi Tabane are teaching, and Timi, like Solo, is in journalism.

In the real life of the novelists, the correspondence is almost perfect. Kane and Dadié have held high-ranking positions as Ministers in their respective countries. Others, like Armah, Achebe, Boudjedra, and Mphahlele were at one time involved in teaching careers, and a number of them have occupations that are very close to the public: Abrahams has been a journalist for most of his life and has also been a radio commentator in Jamaica, Armah used to be a television script writer, and Achebe was also director of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation.

They all assumed, or have assumed, public roles in which the pressures are most acute. This situation is summed up by Mbye Baboucar Cham in a comparison which points at the possible incompatibilities that are encountered by these public figures who are writers and therefore artists at the same time:

> The contemporary African writer (and filmmaker) is not only an artist concerned with matters of aesthetics and technique, he is also a political, economic, social, and professional figure in his society. Like other people in positions of moral and political responsibility charged with the tasks of formulating and implementing politics, he is a product of the society.... Thus, unlike the majority of his counterparts in the West who tend to be refugees in their own society with little pressure on the power process, the contemporary African artist, like his griot ancestor, participates actively and intellectually in the affairs of his society at all levels. (Cham, 1984, 23)

The exercise of public responsibility, as duplicated in the novels, gives birth to an internal conflict that is not easily resolved. These artists are public figures by profession, but they are also writers. As artists and writers, they need to be alone to serve the public better. For the purposes of vision and creation, solitude is an indispensable requirement. For Mamadu Ayo, who has studied Armah's views on artists and the arts, "the widespread, conventional view that the poet and the lunatic, not to mention the lover, possess an identical faculty ... is a close neighbor to the other conventional view that solitude and retirement are the nursery of contemplation and visionary creativity." (Ayo, 1985, 517).

As it is captured by Modin in Why Are We So Blest?, the problem is how to be alone in a society that requires the artist to be immediately committed. As he says,

> To be a writer at a time like this, coming from such a people, such a deep destruction, the most criminal. Only one issue is worth our time: how to end the oppression of the African, to kill the European beasts of prey, to remake ourselves, the elected servants of Europe and America. (Why?, 230)

These views point out to the traits of the artist but also to his duties; and the comparison between Western and African concepts of the artist highlights the plight of the writer/artist in Africa. Most of the creative figures in the novels reviewed in this study are not only aware of this dichotomy, but they are also its victims. In fact, it would be interesting to determine how far the fictional outsiders are projections of the writer's position in most societies - isolated because of extra self-awareness, and because he is a seer and a prophet by vocation.

Like Baako and Ocran in Fragments, and like all the other artist figures, the problem is

> to develop a kind of sight which will encompass reality without plunging the viewer into despair. In the light of this problem, Fragments can be seen as an African *Kunstlerroman*- a novel about the artist's education - and the opposed images of the novel (isolation/contact, fragmentation/order, blindness/sight) as aspects of the artist's traditional problem of reconciling apparently incompatible elements into a unified whole. (Lobb, 1980, 33)

In my view however, it is not only that these conflicting elements are incompatible *prima facie*. Rather, it would seem that the artist is only one of two forces in action. Desperately striving to defend a view that is faithful to his vision, he is overwhelmed by the weight of the majority. The killing of the rabid dog, the locking up of the supposedly mad ones, or even their physical elimination are to be interpreted within this conflictual setting. Contrary to the widespread idea that it is the Westernised been-to who is a threat to secular institutions, some of the returned ones are among the most zealous defenders of traditions and custom. In Africa Answers Back, it was indeed Chief Ati who, after a long stay away from the village, is ready to choose the name of the newborn, contrary to the established local custom. It is Oudjo who reminds Kocoumbo of the necessity and meaning of the sacrifice, and it is the madman who notifies Samba Diallo of his duty to pray. But in more recent novels, the situation is inverted. Whereas the majority of the family is absorbed in the preparation for the outdooring ceremony of then newborn, Baako with his grandmother are the only ones who try to oppose it, calling their attention to the exact terms of the ritual.

A reconciliation would necessarily mean some form of betrayal. It is precisely this conflict between what should have happened and what they are actually witnessing that develops in some of the returned been-to's a kind of schizophrenia.

The literary guideposts of this state of functional disintegration are the doubles and mentors that accompany the focal figure. It is not without significance that the double is again double-sided: a negative twin whose traits are absent in the hero, and a positive one who looks exactly like him.

The other characters with whom the been-to identifies are the mentors or the foreigner figures that are represented in the novels. While some mentors act as if they were strangers in their own countries, it is the foreigners who show the clearest signs of integration. Timi, Irmelin, and George Wingdon in The Wanderers are an illustration of this situation. Like all the other sympathetic figures of the novels, these mentors are the critics of a world which they observe from afar. Lawrence Boateng and Ocran in Fragments, Aliyi and Awoonor in The Wanderers are all intellectuals who see clearly but who keep their distance. However, their duty, as they feel it, is to translate in concrete and sometimes shocking terms a reality that transcends the average man, that is beyond his *entendement*.

This conflict is one that is settled in two possible ways. Madness, and the crossing of a desert, both of which are actually the two sides of the same coin. The use of a desert-related imagery suggests that it is not only a period of pain, but it is also that this pain and retirement from the world are necessary prerequisites for the artist and the clear formulation of his vision.

This quest however is not brought to a happy conclusion because the heroes do not succeed. They fail because, as Mildred Mortimer writes, they are heroes, unable to compromise. But, in the final instance, the limit between failure and success tends to be tenuous. In fact

> il existe deux déserts: celui de l'imaginaire, du monde intérieur, et le désert réel, concret, qui n'est pas le pire, qui peut même être pour certains la voie royale vers davantage de paix... Mais, si selon Nietzsche, ce désert-là peut croître, il peut aussi avoir une valeur cathartique, lieu de retraite qui permet de saisir le cours de sa vie, lieu de passage plus que lieu de séjour. (Madelain, 1983, 76-7)

The duality of desert imagery is one that has to be read at several levels. It can be an internal, imaginary desert, as felt by the returned ones, a desert in one's country, one which is more painful than the form of desert as experienced overseas.

Samba Diallo, who compares himself to a Malte Laurids Brigge, experiences a spiritual form of desert that is nevertheless rendered in physical terms. In his eyes, the human beings he sees are deprived of their souls as they have been invaded by machines. This is conveyed by an imagery that insists on the cold that is inherent in metal and cement. As suggested by the rock imagery used in Les Boucs, this process of depersonalisation is taken further. Not only do the protagonists lose their names, but they are part of a barren and sterile universe that stands for the inevitable disintegration that is awaiting them. Fire has reduced all forms of life and creation to ashes and the wind is so hostile that it becomes a destructive force. This destructive power is further reinforced when it is implied that the hero may find death in the desert.

The other aspect of the desert is that it takes the meaning of a "chemin de croix". The hero needs to undergo a painful passage in order to attain a clarity of vision that will enable him to return a new man, a man able to create new things. Speaking of Armah's artist, Mamadu Ayo explains that "he suffers another kind of pain which is, as a matter of fact, the price exacted for his privileged abilities (very much in the tradition of Tiresias) to see more clearly, feel more keenly, and articulate more eloquently than others." (Ayo, 1985, 518)

Madmen are the privileged spokesmen of this vision. In prophetic statements that are not understood by the 'sane' majority, they warn of the danger ahead. As Femi Ojo-Ade sums up

> They know that in the society that gives birth to their madness lies the basic cause of the problems preying on their minds. They know that they are saner than others, many of whom see the rationale behind their actions and attitudes but are themselves too scared or cowardly to join them in their lonely, condemned world. Significantly, the artist creators of these madmen are mostly in agreement with their point of view. The tragedy is that the lonely voice of the madman is overwhelmed by the silence of the 'wise' majority in the wasteland. (Ojo-Ade, 1979, 151).

b. West and North

This research has been about the passage to the North, as defined and discussed in chapter one of part one. The detailed study of the various novels has prompted further reflection on the possible ambiguities in the use of the two terms West and North. The expressions have not been used here indiscriminately, and this research has strengthened the conclusion that the terms belong to a single reality. They convey overlapping but different resonances. West is basically a cultural notion that poses the civilisation of the Western countries against the Orient, thus implying an idea of

hierarchy. North later came into use as an alternative description for the economically advanced countries but again has a symbolic meaning as the spectrum of the word not only points to purely geographical barriers but includes other areas as well. In this respect, though it is geographically situated in the Southern hemisphere, Australia actually belongs to the North because of its technological advancement. From the point of view of Africa, the 'North' is quite literally and geographically to the North of the African continent, but also has all the other connotations as well. In the mind of the African going overseas too, the two aspects are present, West being used for North and vice-versa.

In the mind of the District Commissioner in Things Fall Apart, or of the priest in Bône who advises the young shoe-shine boy of Les Boucs to go to France, there is no need to prove that their respective countries are by far superior to the backward tribes of Africa that are entrusted to their care. The former is shown by Chinua Achebe to be engaged in the collection of data for the future writing up of a book that will significantly be entitled 'The Pacification of the Tribes of the Lower Niger.' The latter is not reported as writing anything specific about his experience in North Africa, but his feeling is no doubt similar to that of the District Commissioner. This can be concluded from the episode when, after he has convinced the young Yalann Waldik to go overseas, he says "J'ai sauvé une âme." Both are typical of the "White Man's Burden" mentality, according to which the Western part of the world is The World, a classification not to be questioned, and in which the rest exited only in a savage state. Another hierarchy has the west often referred to as the Western world, and the Orient is never mentioned as constituting a world in itself. Orient indiscriminately refers to the Far East, the Middle east, and Africa North of the Sahara. In this respect, it is worth noting for instance that for the French people of the Napoleonic period, going to Algiers, to the colonies, was already the ultimate form of exoticism, of *dépaysement*. A more recent distinction has it that all non-Western countries are imprecisely called the Third World, an area that does not deserve to have the same sort of designation as the West.

For the African that is portrayed in the novels under study, this division between West and Orient, North and South, has been unconsciously accepted. The colonial schools they went to have taught them the essentials of this hierarchy. European countries were always referred to as the Metropolis, the Mother Country, as opposed to the colonies which were kept in the grammatically indefinite form. In Algeria for example, my generation, like many of my elders who could go to school, was taught according to the Metropolitan curriculum that our ancestors were Gauls who had fair hair and

blue eyes. This conditioning is reciprocated on a fictional level in the existence of figures in the novels whose sole desire is to become as assimilated as possible. On an ironical register, Bernard Dadié portrays a Tanhoé Bertin who is eager to go North in order to compare the image of France he has had for years with its real image. A view of a more assimilated character in that of Kocoumbo in Aké Loba's Kocoumbo l'étudiant noir when he sincerely admits that he was really impatient to see this France about which he had read so many magazines, and the history and the geography of which he had been taught to love.

To these figures, going to France, to Britain, or overseas in general, has a dual meaning. By going to the West, they are going to "the place where knowledge has come to an end," that is the place where people are the most learned. The same journey also takes them North, as the land they are going to is situated beyond the boundaries of the known universe. It is, on the one hand, a physical journey that is shown to uproot the departing one; he is travelling from a familiar world to an unknown one. Witness for example the feeling of nostalgia that characterises the narration of Camara Laye's L'enfant noir. On the other hand, this separation is accepted quite naturally as it is the key for a better future. Ismail's father in Yahya Haqqi's The Saint's Lamp is ready to spend his last penny in order to give his son the opportunity to enter higher education in Britain.

A thorough reading of the novels shows however that the distinction between the two concepts is not as clear-cut, either in the minds of the authors, or in that of their characters. The protagonists indiscriminately use one word for the other. They hesitate between feelings of rejection and total acceptance of the connotations of North and West, so much so that the term "ambiguous adventure" would seem to be a suitable phrase to describe this hesitation.

North and West According to the Chosen Novelists.

Some of the novelists refer to the West in terms of a geographical notion. Their narratives insist on the physical distance that separates Africa from the countries of the west. As the contact with the West most of the time takes place within a cycle of departure, initiation, and return, some of the descriptions emphasize not only the length of the initiation phase but also the duration of the voyage which, for some of the been-to's takes place by boat. This is why for example when the returned been-to narrates his crossing to a local audience of elders (as in No Longer At Ease for instance) the latter often measure the distance between their world and the other one in terms of local yardsticks such as market days. For the

early African traveler the country of destination is equally imprecisely situated beyond seven seas, beyond the limits of the known world and the residence of ancestral spirits as it is rendered by Naana in Armah's Fragments for example.

From the point of view of a traditional background, the West is referred to as the land of a hostile climate and an alien religion. The early Algerian emigrants (of the period preceding the first World War) referred to in Mouloud Feraoun's La Terre et le Sang sincerely believed that going to France was a highly hazardous business. Leaving their native Kabyle village for the not so distant Mitidja, or for towns such as Philippeville, Bône, or Gafsa, was already perceived as being an exasperating experience. They needed more than courage to cross the Mediterranean. As Mouloud Feraoun reveals, "Seuls les plus hardis osaient traverser la mer, croyaient affronter de grands périls, et acceptaient l'idée d'être damnés pour avoir vécu en pays chrétien" (La Terre, 50) [Only the most adventurous dared to cross the sea, convinced as they were that they would be heading for a perilous adventure, and accepted the idea of being damned because they were going to live in a Christian land][1]. A stereotype of the same nature makes Ismail's parents in Yahya Haqqi's The Saint's Lamp envision England as the land of the cold, of the devil, and of depraved women. The "lands of abroad" as they are called are thought to be "like the top of a flight of steps leading to a land covered with snow and inhabited by people who possessed the cunning and the tricks of the devil [and in which women were believed to go about] semi-naked and all excelled in beauty and charm." (The Saint's Lamp, 12). As a consequence, when his father recommends him to strictly observe his religion and to keep off European women, his advice echoes the remark of Bint Majzoub who, in Season of Migration to the North, unequivocally expresses her being glad and relieved that on his return to the village of Wad Hamid Mihaimid has not fallen in love with what she refers to as an "uncircumcised infidel," i.e. a European woman.

Western Know-How, Technology and "Civilisation"

Looking at the West in a cautious manner is not however the exclusive attitude of the Arabo-Muslim novelists dealt with here. Cheikh Hamidou Kane, another Muslim novelist, from West Africa, introduces in his L'Aventure Ambiguë another equally cautious view of the Western world as standing for the antithesis of his traditional one, especially as concerns the attitude of men towards God. This fear is however superseded by a more urgent mission according to which Samba Diallo is asked to find in the white man's country ways for the survival of his defeated people. In Samba Diallo is epitomized

this conflict which makes him hesitate between his will to defend God and his desire to be faithful to his sponsors. Therefore, the ambiguous adventure he is plunged into against his will takes its meaning from his inability to discover where the secret for the supremacy of the white man lies. While his sponsors are convinced that this secret is the key for the survival of the Diallobé people, Samba Diallo is less positive. As he attempts to identify the ways in which the materialism of the West and the spiritualism of his traditional world can be reconciled, he indirectly implies that the assumed hierarchy of superiority between the West and Africa is unfounded. Like Tanhoé Bertin in Un Nègre à Paris, he comes to the conclusion that the European is as good or as bad as the African.

For the French "assimilé" portrayed by Bernard Dadié, the metropolis is always seen as representing the summit of advancement. Like Cheikh Hamidou Kane, Dadié shows how his degree of assimilation (see Milbury-Steen, 1980, 141) makes one approach Europeans with a certain ambiguity, though his assimilation is less complete than that which is displayed in Kocoumbo, l'étudiant noir. Tanhoé Bertin goes to France as a relaxed traveller, as opposed to Kocoumbo for whom it is a more serious question of acquiring the wisdom of the white patriarchs, that is the technical knowledge which allows the white man to build planes such as the one that impressed Kocoumbo's father so much. Whereas for the young Kocoumbo, this plane is the undisputed mark of the Western technological superiority, Tanhoé Bertin is not so easily impressed. One of his aims (as illustrated in the three chronicles of Bernard Dadié) is to combat the ready-made ideas that Europeans have of Africans and vice-versa. The West therefore is no longer the strange "lands of abroad" or the land of the Christians, but Paris becomes a place just like any other place, and the voyage of "un Nègre" to Paris should be put in that perspective of relativisation.

The dilemma at the origin of the voyage of Samba Diallo in the West underlines that the survival of the Diallobé depends exclusively on whether Samba Diallo is able to discover the secret of the white man's superiority. In other words, the Most Royal Lady is interested in the Western technology as a way of providing her people with the necessary means for survival. It is also a desire for survival that takes the Maghrebine emigrants into a voyage to France and Europe in general. In portraying emigrants who go to France because they think it is the land of milk and honey, the Maghrebine writers harp on the technological and economic superiority of the West. For the respective heroes of La Terre et le Sang, Les Boucs, or Topographie going overseas is also a matter of survival. But, as opposed to the heroes of L'Aventure Ambiguë or to a certain extent of Africa Answers Back, there

is no question for them of spiritual survival. Such questions as spiritualism or materialism do not concern them as they are confronted with more down to earth and more immediate issues. Such immediate issues are already hinted at in the cases of Samba Diallo and Stanley Mujungu. When the Most Royal Lady insists that going to the white school and country is the best way to learn how to "lier le bois au bois et se construire des demeures qui résistent au temps" ["to join wood to wood and to make wooden buildings that resist the elements(Woods, 9 and 11)], she means that for her it is more urgent to survive materially first In other words *primum vivere, deudum philosophare.* In the case of Abala Stanley Mujungu, the debate is formulated in very similar terms. When the King tells the chiefs that they are free to choose their religion, and when chief Ati sends his son to the white school of the Reverend Hubert, he is expecting him to discover the truth about the foreign religion. But as Mujungu has a more prolonged contact with the white man (although it is in the microcosmic universe of the school), and later succeeds to his deceased father, he is more preoccupied with bringing his people whatever is positively beneficial in the science of the white man. In other words, his concern is to improve the daily life of his kinsmen.

The search for a better life is indeed at the centre of the heroes' decision to go overseas. In Les Boucs, the young Berber whom Yalann Waldik meets at Le Bourget airport is said to have a naive and confident view of Europe. When Yalann looks at "cet enfant là-bas avec son cou et son âme grêles et son panier posé à ses pieds et accroché à la barrière frêle face à l'Europe - [and says] quel absolu nous avons tous de cette Europe!"(Les Boucs,104 emphasis mine) ["this child down there with his neck and his soul so thin and his basket at his feet and glued to the barricade frail before all of Europe - what an absolute this Europe is for all of us!" (Harter, 65)], he refers to a collective view of the Western world that prevails among his generation of emigrants. For the early Algerian, and indeed the Maghrebine emigrants in general, France was thought to be "un pays de cocagne," the land of milk and honey.

The other image of France is that of the land of civilisation - a direct reflection of French propaganda - where a teenager, in the words of the French priest, is assured of having far better prospects than merely becoming an eternal shoe-shine boy. This view is confirmed by the early Kabyle emigrants in La Terre et le Sang who, on their return to the village report that, despite the common belief which sees France as being the land of the devil, they had been given a good welcome, unexpected consideration and a good salary; they brought back more money than the villagers who went to the Mitidja for example. They are like the *laskars* of Topographie who,

after their stay in Paris, "sont rentrés au bercail fortune faite" and have become the major contributors to the public funds of the *Piton.*

This view of France as being an *El Dorado* is deconstructed by both Driss Chraibi and Rachid Boudjedra. In their representation of France/Europe, they insist on the gap between the expectations of the emigrants and what they actually find overseas. Their basic reaction is that of being heavily disappointed. Yalann Waldik underlines the booby-trap character of the recruitment campaign of which he had been the object:

> Oui, disait Waldik, il y même des panneaux. [...] des panneaux publicitaires en la bonne vieille ville d'Alger, à l'intention de ces pauvres gourdes d'Arabes, et qui proclament en lettres rouges et immenses que la main-d'œuvre manque en France, que la démocratie abonde en France, qu'il n'y a qu'à s'inscrire dans telle agence qui supporterait même les frais de voyage... lorsque j'y suis allé, on m'a demandé des arrhes - et j'ai préféré franchir la mer par mes propres moyens: dans un fût qui avait contenu du goudron. Mais le résultat a été le même: votre patron et vos contremaîtres ont eu leurs arrhes, à cette différence près qu'ils m'ont arraché jusqu'à ma veste" (Les Boucs, 121)
>
> ["Yes, said Waldik, there are even posters."... "Billboards with posters in our good city of Algiers for the benefit of those poor dumb Arabs that announce in big red letters that workers are needed in France, that democracy abounds in France, that all you have to do is go down to such and such agency and they'll even pay you the trip... When I went to the agency, they wanted some money down, so I got across the sea in my own way: in a tar-barrel. The result was the same. Your boss and your colleagues all got their money down. The only difference was that they took everything down to the last clothes on my back." (Harter, 77)]

The cultural and ideological West

With some of the novelists we deal with in this study, it is not only the physical aggression on the been-to that helps define the West as such. For both Salih and Armah for example, the intellectual aggression is more important because it is more durable in time. It is the case when Armah refers to the effects of the cargo-cult, or to the fate of African students overseas who unconsciously become "mere factors for the enslavement of their own people" as they take part in what he refers to as the "European continuum."

Mustafa Sa'eed in Season of Migration to the North, for example, constitutes an elaborate illustration of the intellectual aggression of the West on a receptive African. While on his return to Sudan he is shown to be living among the peasants of Wad Hamid who have adopted him, and while he gives the impression that he is fully integrated into the community, his

mind is still overseas, as the existence of his secret study later proves. The Minister in Chinua Achebe's A Man of the People is also a case in point. Like the members of the government in Ousmane Sembène's Xala, he is officially the progressive minister but he insists on employing exclusively white secretaries because he is convinced that they are more efficient than the Blacks who are are believed to be lazy and untrustworthy. Other examples of alienation can also be found in the novels of Ayi Kwei Armah among others. Joseph Koomson, the Minister of State of The Beautyful Ones is one of them. He is so conditioned that he refuses to drink anything that is not imported from overseas. Even the first names of his children are carefully chosen within the white register of forenames. Brempong too (in Fragments) is treated as if he were a white man. As he is welcomed at Accra airport, his relatives are proud of him not only because he has returned a big man, a 'white' man, but also because he has brought back with him those undisputed signs of white technology and comfort which the atypical figures of Armah reject because they are the expression of an adhesion to what he calls the cargo cult.In so rejecting the manifestations of the cargo cult, some protagonists in Armah's novels, like Baako in Fragments, have deliberately chosen to go against the general current and have been referred to as the atypical ones.

c. The Male Been-to and his Female Counterpart

Another facet of this journey to the North is the recurrence of mixed couples in the novels examined in this study. It is quite significant that out of a total of nineteen novels (this includes secondary sources) eleven, i.e. more than fifty per cent, depict a mixed couple. Far from being a fictional reality only, it is the transposition into literature of a real-life phenomenon, as it is illustrated for example with the case of Tayeb Salih who married an English woman. Because the protagonists reviewed are all males, it is a question of journeyers to the North bringing back Northern spouses, or developing close links of friendship or of love with a female Northern partner. The other aspect, not mentioned in this study, is the partnership resulting from Northern journeyers to the South who take partners in the South. One example of this partnership is Hazel Mugot's Black Night of Quiloa (Nairobi: EAPH, 1971), a story of love and betrayal between Hima and a white stranger who takes her to England. Not mentioned here also is the nature of the couple some of the been-to's find on their return home, such as is signaled in the cases of Baako in Fragments whose only partner is the Puerto-Rican Juana, and also Kisimi in The African who opts for a traditional marriage with Fatmata, a local uneducated girl.

In the novels considered in this study, there are very few cases where the been-to takes his partner South. In Mbella Sonne Dipoko's A Few Nights and Days (London: Longman, 1966), an African student living and working in Paris falls in love with Thérèse, a French girl he decides to marry. The girl's parents reluctantly give their consent, provided that they stay in France, while the boy's parents, on the contrary, insist that he should return home. In collusion with his prospective father-in-law, the boy secretly leaves France without telling Thérèse and thereby unwittingly occasions the ultimate tragedy. The girl commits suicide when she discovers the plot. In La Terre et le Sang, Amer-ou-Kaci arrives in France and meets Marie, with whom he falls in love. They get married and live for some time in France before they decide to go back to Amer's native village in Algeria's Kabylie, Ighil Nezman. Though their union at first provokes a certain surprise, Marie is quickly accepted, especially after Amer's accidental death, when during his funeral, the village discovers that she is pregnant, therefore bearing Amer's successor. In Mariama Bâ's Le Chant Ecarlate (Dakar: NEA, 1981), a French woman is married to a Senegalese man. Here too, the narration focuses on the problems encountered by the wife in her efforts to adapt to her husband's culture.

The rest of the novels do not show the couples returning to Africa. They can be divided into two groups. First, the couples where the relationship is based on love, and then, the case where the been-to is an adolescent for whom it is not quite clear whether his female partner is a lover, a mother figure, or simply a tutor. To the first group belong the focal figures described in such novels as A Wreath for Udomo where Lois is deeply in love with Udomo, Mirages de Paris with the couple Fara/Jacqueline, and Les Boucs with the pair Yalann/Simone. Kisimi and Greta, the white South African girl depicted in The African form a truly idealistic inter-racial love. Another such couple is described in The Wanderers where the Englishman Steven Cartwright finally marries Naledi, a young black South African widow whom he decides to take to England with the consent of his parents. In The Wanderers again, the narrator mentions that, during his stay in Iboyoru, many of his acquaintances were mixed couples.

In the second group, the African protagonists are mostly young adolescents. Their childhood in Africa, whenever it is described in the novels, is dominated by the figure of the mother/father as in Camara Laye's The African Child. With the exception of Kocoumbo, in Kocoumbo l'étudiant noir, who obviously shows a certain maturity in his relationship with Denise, they all feel the need to rely on a tutor or a mother figure during their stay in the North. In L'Aventure Ambiguë, Samba Diallo is not

indifferent to Lucienne, but they are shown to spend most of their time confronting their respective views on Africa. Ismail, in The Saint's Lamp, finds in Mary not only a temporary lover, but also someone who initiates him to new ideas. She, like Aileen of Tayeb Salih's "Letter to Aileen," looks after him and takes him to Scotland for a visit to the highlands to restore his health. In Topographie too, Rachid feels the need to confide in the French *coopérante* Céline, and her function is quite ambiguous as she alternately represents the adviser, the mother, and the lover. Mustafa Sa'eed has a fundamentally different relationship with his English wives. In his Season of Migration to the North, Tayeb Salih shows that Mustafa behaved like a conqueror who found a certain malignant pleasure in killing them.

Other instances of mixed couples will be found in the following novels: René Maran, Un homme comme les autres, Pater Abrahams, The Path of Thunder (Larry Schwartz/Sarie Villiers), Jean Malonga, Cœur d'Aryenne (Mabeke/Solange), Sembène Ousmane, O pays, mon beau peuple (Oumar Faye/Isabelle), and his Le docker noir with the couple Dia Falla/Ginette Fontisane. Ama Ata Aidoo's No Sweetness Here also points at the idea of the mixed marriage, but it is given a different tone. As it is developed in her play The Dilemma of a Ghost, Aidoo is concerned with the relationship of Africans and African-Americans[2].

An exhaustive listing of all the mixed couples in African novels would be of little relevance here. However, one possible line of investigation would be the cases where it is the African female who is married to a Northerner she meets either in the South or during her stay in the North.

3. Recommendation for further research

a. African Women Writers and the Journey to the North

The narratives that have been examined in this study are male-oriented. The been-to's of the 1960's or 70's were essentially male. Since then, the situation in Africa has changed considerably. More and more African females are also going overseas, and it would be a subject worthy of study to see how they actually render in fiction their experience in the West.

The appearance of women authors in African literature is a relatively recent phenomenon. These authors are making their initial efforts to enter the literary world and their works are written in the light of an awakening feminism. So far, the students of African literature have dealt with the African woman as a topic in that literature, but very seldom as a contributor. For Lloyd W. Brown whose judgement is now no longer valid, "the neglect of the African woman as a writer results, in part, from the invisibility, or near invisibility, of women writers in general..." (Brown,

1974, 172). African women writers do exist but their constraints are heavier that those of their male homologues.

These constraints are summed up by Nafissatou Diallo when she says in the preface to her book: "Je ne suis pas une héroine de roman mais une femme toute simple de ce pays; une mère de famille et une professionnelle à qui sa maison et son métier laissent peu de loisir." (quoted by Lambrech, 1982, 137).

Sissie, in Ama Ata Aidoo's Our Sister Killjoy, is a female student who goes abroad on a study program. Her experience of the West fundamentally differs from the one reported in the male-oriented narratives. Speaking of Sissie's stay in Germany, where she is befriended by a strange Marija who offers her a disturbingly intimate hospitality, Anita Kern writes that "this slightly bizarre acquaintance certainly rings a change on some of the tales of African male writers in Europe." (Kern, 1978, 56).

Although Ama Ata Aidoo, through Sissie, shares with her male counterparts a certain degree of anger with African attitudes towards the "European continuum" and African politics in general, my assumption however is that the female experience of the West is bound to be somewhat different. Whereas the male been-to's are more or less autonomous - the ties with their families being more or less constraining, the female travellers are supposedly more sensitive to family connections. This narrow room for manœuvre is perhaps a likely explanation for Ama Ata Aidoo's impatient indictment of both Africa and the West.

In Une Si Longue Lettre, Mariama Bâ also focuses on the contact of a female character with the West. Aissatou, one of the two heroines of the novel, is a well-educated woman who divorces a well-to-do husband and leaves Dakar for New York, where she makes a new life for herself as an interpreter at the Senegalese Embassy.

Like Aissatou, Ama Ata Aidoo has spent two years away from Ghana, travelling in the United States and England. It is only after her return to Ghana that her 1970 collection of short stories No Sweetness Here is published.One can reasonably suppose that a close reading of some of these short stories will bring forth Aidoo's view of the West

Another possible source of reference is The Night Harry Died, by the Nigerian Adaora Lily Ulasi, a novel which is set in the American South in the early twentieth century, and also the novels of Bessie Head, who can be seen here as rendering the female equivalent of Mphahlele's experience in Africa.

b. Other Writers' Perception of the West

The theme of the journey to the North can also be extended to cover the works of other novelists who write in Arabic. The theme is indeed not a new one in Arabic literature. In her 'Othello's Season of Migration to the North,' Barbara Harlow indicates that with Napoleon's entry into Egypt in 1798, and with the renewed European interest in the Orient, "there took place what has been called the 'Arab rediscovery of Europe'."(Harlow, 1979, 161). This starts in the period of pasha Muhamad 'Ali who, for the needs of the country's modernisation, sent delegations of students to study language, law, and the military arts in the capitals of Europe.

Later, in response to the growing influence of Western mores and values, "the Arabs were reasserting an identity of their own in reaction to that imposed on them by foreigners and foreign powers. They had recourse to the old legends, and new ones evolved. One such legend became that of the Arab who travels, not by camel across the desert, but West, by ship across the sea."(Harlow, 1979, 161)

Because of the nature of this contact which Barbara Harlow has thus summed up, and the subsequent specific response to Western culture, an examination of some novels from Egypt would indeed reveal the way in which the West was perceived. One has also to be aware that there exists a large body of literature in Arabic coming from other Arab countries. Therefore, this suggested analysis would also gain in interest if it was extended so as to include the Arabophone Maghrebine writers as well. A starting point can be, among the literary ancestors of Season of Migration to the North, Tawfiq al-Hakim's 'Usfur min al-Sharq (Bird form the East, 1938).

Indian writing in English also seems to provide a logical continuation of this thematic geography. The Serpent and the Rope (1960) by the Indian writer Raja Rao is a good case in point. The novel is set in three countries: France, India, and England. It seems to have the characteristics of both Un Nègre à Paris and of L'Aventure Ambiguë for the hero, Ramaswany, gives his impressions on both France and England. Like Samba Diallo, he has a double culture. He is a young orthodox Brahmin from a village in Mysore, read in the Upanishads, but also educated on Western lines. He goes to Paris, where he marries a French catholic, and later to London. These voyages give him the opportunity to scrutinise the French and English way of life and intellectual tradition, as well as an attempt to compare Europe with India[3].

The case of Raja Rao could be the starting point for a further investigation into Indian literature of the voyage not only written in English, but also possibly in French.

Although the culture and languages of Europe are not so alien to them, the West Indian writers seem to carry an idealised view of what they are going to find in Europe. However the novels in French and English from the West Indies would equally constitute another line worthy of research. The following are possible references: George Lamming In the Castle of My Skin (1953), and The Pleasures of Exile (1960), Wilson Harris Water with Berries, and Samuel Selvon The Lonely Londoners (1956)[4]

4. Future directions in the African novel.

The development of modern African literature has been influenced and shaped in various ways by various mechanisms and processes injected into African societies as a result of contact with Islamic and Euro-Christian forces. This development has followed three important phases which have been effectively captured by Frantz Fanon. The first period that has been called apprenticeship or assimilationist gave way to a literature of combat as African countries were engaged in the process of independence. What the writer did not do on the battlefield he felt compelled to do with his pen and his writing. After the period of independence, comes a stage Frantz Fanon called the third phase.

> In the first phase, the native intellectual gives proof that he has assimilated the culture of the occupying power. His writings correspond point by point with those of his opposite numbers in the mother country. His inspiration is European and we can easily link up these works with definite trends in the literature of the mother country. This is the period of unqualified assimilation... In the second phase, we find the native is disturbed; he decides to remember what he is. ... But since the native is not part of his people, since he only has exterior relations with his people, he is content to recall their life only. Past happenings of byegone days of his childhood will be brought out in the depth of his memory; old legends will be reinterpreted in the light of a borrowed aestheticism and a conception of the world which was discovered under other skies...In a third phase, which is called the fighting phase, the native, after having tried to lose himself in the people and with the people, will, on the contrary shake the people. Instead of according the people's lethargy an honored place in his esteem, he turns himself into an awakener of the people; hence comes a fighting literature, a revolutionary literature, and a national literature... During this phase, a great many men and women... feel the need to speak to their nation, to compose the sentence which expresses the heart of the people, and to become the

mouthpiece of a new reality in action. (Fanon, 1968, 223).

For the most part, the novels that have been examined in this study belong to this last phase. In addition to The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born, A Man of the People, and La Répudiation, many other African novels of the same period express the disillusionment of the writers, that is of the people, with the outcome of independence (see Stewart, 1976). Conveying messages of a deep-seated malaise, the more recent ones show a certain complexity of structure as well as a more and more sophisticated message that only reflects a complex reality.

In using abstract forms and sophisticated ways of writing, the danger is that this may alienate the reader. In the novelists' genuine attempt to give literary expression to the concerns of the majority of the population, of the masses, the risk is there that they become only the wild imaginings of a lonely artist understood by a minority of educated people. A change in themes has already been announced by Meja Mwangi who focuses on the problems of the masses, on more immediate and down-to-earth issues, and this is, in my view, one of the major directions the African novel will be taking. The restriction of more general issues to the expression of a class-consciousness is indeed a convenient strategy that would bring the writer nearer to the masses, to the ones he ultimately wishes to represent. What is important however is not that they are represented. It is essential to start with that the message of the writer is understood by the ones he wishes to address.

An initial interest was the relationship of the African writer with his various audiences. However, these considerations have been taken for granted as they have been the object of study of other scholars, namely Charles Bonn for North Africa, and Phanuel Akubueze Egejuru for Africa South of the Sahara. The ambivalent character of the question of audience is therefore not discussed. One has to be aware that because of the use of a foreign language, the novelist has two reading publics in mind. First, a European audience which often reads the novels through a framework of Western cultural and literary standards. Then, an African, or rather several African audiences depending on the level of literacy in the language used, which he claims is his primary constituency.

A possible answer to that controversial subject is the new direction which is quite accurately suggested by Cham. Speaking of African verbal art and pre-colonial literature in Africa, he writes:

> The language, images, style and content of African verbal art are deeply rooted in its environment, and all of these are quite familiar to the audience. This accounts for the organic relationship between the artist and the audience in this context. The predicament of modern African creative expression in foreign language derives from the severence of this organic relationship, a fact which explains the attempts of some artists today to reach for other media, such as film, capable of re-establishing or at least closely approximating this organic relationship between artist and audience. (Cham, 1984, 19)

This is this fact that explains why some of the African writers have now reverted to the use of the mother tongue and also to other art forms which can reach a wider public. This is the case with the late Yacine Kateb who has irreversibly opted for theatre in dialectal Arabic with plays such as Le Roi de l'Ouest (1967), Mohamed Prends Ta Valise (1971), Saout Ennisaa (Women's Voices, 1972), La Guerre de 2000 Ans (1974), and Palestine Trahie (1977, reset 1982) This is also true of Ousmane Sembène who has chosen film expression; the list of his successful films is already a long one: Ceddo, Borom Sarret, Emitai, Mandabi, and Xala. Wole Soyinka has also acknowledged the interest of this form of expression; he has already produced a film version of his play Kongi's Harvest, a radio-play entitled Camwood on the Leaves (originally in a published form in 1973) and another film: Blues for a Prodigal (1985) Ngugi wa Thiongo's I Will Marry When I Want (1982) which is rendered into Kikuyu as Ngaahika Ndeenda (1977), as well as Devil on the Cross (1982) of which the original in Kikuyu is entitled Caitaani Mutharaba-ini (1980), a play that was so popular in the Kikuyu edition that it went to three printings in the first three months of its publication

This study has attempted to group a certain number of African novelists, regardless of their language of writing and of their nationality. It is my hope that the adjective 'African' has emerged as bearing a new, extended meaning. Beyond this wish to reach a continental view, much of the argument developed here has served to illustrate this hesitation between individualistic values, as inherited from the contact with Western culture, and traditional communal values, and also between one language and another.

For the author, who has provided here an Algerian, and hopefully an African view, much of this study has been triggered by an intuition based on a personal experience of the Western world. It is also a personal attempt to come to grips with a personal environment, an attempt to reach some form of reconciliation with reality.

NOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

NOTES

Notes to Part One, Chapters One and Two

1.Been-to: It is a word that refers to the one who has spent a certain time overseas, literally meaning the one who has been to Europe or America. Attached to this concept are ideas that the been-to is a new, a different man, with special qualities and attributes. One of his major traits is not the degree he is bringing back, but most of the time, tangible material goods among which the car is of an extreme importance. The other concept used in connection with the word been-to is the notion of cargo. This notion, first defined by anthropologists, has been taken up by African writers such as Ayi Kwei Armah and Chinua Achebe as a metaphor for the return of African students from overseas. Another metaphor commonly used is the "Golden Fleece".

2.Colonial: Colonial is used here to refer to the white school in pre-independence Africa, as opposed to the Koranic school for example. Its starting is the colonial period, and the adjective later changes in the post-colonial era where the western type of school becomes another frame of reference.

3.Updike: The American dimension of 'exile' or the American importance in any definition of "the West" is not a concern of this thesis, important though the topic may be. Works like Hailey's Roots are a quest for the origins in Africa which counteract an alienated existence in the USA. This however, is not the subject of this thesis.

4. This has been the subject of many important works among which we can cite: Roland LEBEL L'Afrique Occidentale dans la Littérature Française depuis 1870 (Paris: Larose, 1925) and his Histoire de la Littérature Coloniale en France (Paris: Larose, 1931); Pierre JOURDA L'Exotisme dans la Littérature Française depuis Chateaubriand (Paris: Boivin, 1956, 2 vol); Roger MERCIER L'Afrique Noire dans la Littérature Française, les premières images (XVII et XVIII siècles) (Université de Dakar, Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines, Publications de la Section 'Langues et Littératures,' n° 11, 1962); Léon FANOUDH-SIEFER Le Mythe du Nègre et de l'Afrique Noire dans la Littérature Française (de 1800 à la deuxième guerre mondiale) (Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de Paris-Nanterre, Série B: Essais, 3, Paris: Libriarie Klincksieck, 1968); Martine

ASTIER-LOUTFI Littérature et Colonialisme (Paris: Mouton, 1971); Joseph JURT 'L'image de l'Afrique et des Africains dans la littérature française. Un état présent des recherches' in Oeuvres et Critiques 1979, autumn, 219-28; Léon-François HOFFMANN Le Nègre Romantique. Personnage Littéraire et Obsession Collective; Guy TURBET-DELOF L'Afrique Barbaresque dans la littérature française aux 16e et 17e siècles; Bernard LEIBRICH L'Image du Monde Arabe et du Monde Noir (thesis in progress). There have also been studies dealing with specific countries such as DUPUY L'Algérie dans les Lettres Françaises...; Revue de L'Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée, Le Maghreb dans l'Imaginaire Français (Aix: Edisud, 1985). For the English contribution to the subject, we can refer to E.D. JONES The Elizabethan Image of Africa. Raoul GRANQVIST in his mémoire Stereotypes in Western Fiction on Africa (Umea Papers in English, Umea, Sweden, 1984) mentions in his bibliography some titles that can illustrate this tendency: Eldred JONES Othello's countrymen: the African in English Renaissance Drama (London: Oxford University Press, 1965); G.D. KILLAM Africa in English Fiction, ? - 1939 (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1968); and Brian V. STREET The Savage in Literature (London & Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975)

5. See general bibliography.

6. Illegitimacy : This concept is well developed by Daniele Marx-Scouras in "the Poetics of Maghrebine Illegitimacy" in L'Esprit Créateur, 26, 1, spring 1986, 3-10, and also by the Moroccan Abdelkébir Khatibi.

7. Other than the novels we have mentioned either in the primary sources or the ones we intend to refer to for the purposes of comparison, we should note Bakary Diallo, Force-Bonté; Ousmane Sembène, Le docker noir; Abbé Michel Kakoya, Sur les traces de mon père and Entre deux mondes.; Thomas Kanza, Sans rancune; Joseph Casely-Hayford, Ethiopia Unbound.; and Mbella Sonne Dipoko, A Few Nights and Days, Buchi Emecheta, —

8. see general bibliography.

9. 'Bolekaja' : The authors proclaim themselves "*bolekaja* critics," outraged touts for the passenger lorries of African literature [and touts who] are administering a timely and healthy dose of much needed public ridicule to the reams of pompous nonsense which has been floating out of the stale, sterile, stifling covens of academia and smothering the sprouting vitality of Africa's literary landscape."(Chinweizu et al, 1985, xii)

Notes to Part Two, Chapters Three, Four, and Five.

1.I would like to refer here to two main articles: one by Tidjani-Serpos Nouréini entitled 'De l'école coranique à l'école étrangère ou le passage tragique de l'Ancien au Nouveau dans L'Aventure Ambiguë de Cheikh Hamidou Kane'; the other one by Sœur Marie-Céleste S.C. entitled 'Le mysticisme chez Cheikh Hamidou Kane'. The article by Tidjani-Serpos Nouréini is divided into two subheadings (école coranique, école coloniale) and his concluding statement tends towards a rehabilitation of Cheikh Hamidou Kane and his novel in the broader terms of messianic writings.

2

.In 1962, Cheikh Hamidou Kane was awarded the 'Grand prix de l'Afrique francophone'.

3. For reasons of clarity, we will refer to the peasant as Said, 'à la suite de' Bertrand Poirot-Delpech's article on Topographie entitled 'Said dans le métro'.

One of the complexities of the novel is the question of the narrator. There are in fact several layers of narration where the action is told, in turn, by the narrator, the hero, witnesses in the underground, the police-officer in charge of the inquiry concerning the murder of the peasant , the laskars... This variety of narrators will be referred to as 'the narrating instances'. The three laskars represent three Algerian retired emigrants returned home, who are also 'anciens moudjahidine' or veterans who took part in the 'guerre de libération nationale' as members of the 'Fédération de France du FLN'. Their once clandestine activities consisted in collecting arms, raising funds, and distributing tracts to help the resistants in Algeria. After the war some were given political responsibilities referred to in the novel as "à perdre notre temps au lieu d'expliquer la révolution agraire au peuple du Piton" (Topographie, 147).

4. For the function of nicknames see part three, section: Desert-related imagery.

As for the origin of the surname Mac O' Mac, it relates to an ideological quarrel between the novelist and the French writer and politician François Mauriac. With his publishing his first novel Le Passé Simple (1954) Driss Chraibi seized the opportunity to denounce those political views that were opposed to his own. For him the French-Moroccan drama had been settled in a disastrous manner. For Chraibi, instead of bringing back the sultan and granting independence, which to him is an "occidentalisation factice", it

would have been better to initiate a "revalorisation de leur propre civilisation" i.e. social and religious reforms before independence. One of the partisans of this first solution to the problem of Morocco was François Mauriac to whom he mockingly dedicates the novel and who is represented by Mac O' Mac. "Dans Les Boucs, Kadra-Hadjadji writes, il a créé un personnage qui est une caricature de François Mauriac: il s'agit de Mac O' Mac, romancier chrétien (il est l'auteur de La Sainte Famille), spécialiste des problèmes nord-africains, un être sans scrupules qui exploite les immigrés et vole à Waldik sa concubine." (Kadra-Hadjadji, 1986, 58).

5.This film appears to have no relationship with the screen version of the life of Steve Biko, directed by Sir Richard Attenborough.

Notes to Part Three.

1. Ananse. Called Anansi in West Africa, Annancy in America, Annanci in the West Indies, and referred to sometimes by Ghanaian writers as Ananse Kokrofu, the Great Spider. He is the cleverest of animals and often appears in a mythology where he is the chief official of God. His legend is made up of anecdotes during which Anansi shows his intelligence. He is also famous for his tricks.

Djoha. A parallel legend also exist in North Africa with the figure of Djoha. He is a witty and clever character who appears in folktales and popular sayings. He is always referred to as someone clever and very shrewd. He is famous for his ability to get himself out of extremely tricky situations. He represents popular wisdom but he is a very down-to-earth character: "Il est à la fois très concret, très pratique, très terre à terre et en même temps très intelligent, très fin. Et il représente cette double présence spirituelle du peuple qui combine des attitudes pratiques et analytiques profondes et importantes. Djoha, c'est le personnage mi-naif, mi-génial qui exprime le bon sens populaire."(Boudjedra in Bouraoui, 1979, 167).

2. This detail is reminiscent of the Christiansborg Castle episode mentioned in Armah's Why Are We So Blest? The students are taken on an excursion to the castle and its Presidential wing which "had been renovated at a cost of two and a half million pounds to make it fit for the President to move in. The British governor used to live there before this colony got a new name."(Why,76). The comfort of the Presidential Wing, with its swimming pool, air conditioning... is contrasted with the 'factor's quarters' on the side opposite. Not only were the slaves being kept there before shipment, but it was there that the factor, 'the slave-dealer', stayed while bargaining with the Europeans about the price of the slaves.

3. Parallel to the Ghanaian situation. It is Ghana that Mphahlele had actually in mind while writing this. The state visit to Indonesia is actually Nkrumah's visit to Peking (cf 'Africa in Exile' by Mphahlele). It is fictional licence that permits him to confuse places but in reality it was Nkrumah's statue, which stood in front of Parliament House in Accra, which was toppled down during the coup.

4. For further analysis of this theme, see Neil Lazarus's unpublished paper 'Perceptions of independence in African literature: an overview', Department

of Sociology, Yale University.

5. For a discussion of the function of language in No Longer At Ease and in Achebe's novels in general see the general bibliography for INNES & LINDFORS Critical Perspectives on Chinua Achebe and the articles of RIDDY Felicity, 'Language as theme in No Longer At Ease', and LINDFORS Bernth, 'The palm oil with which Achebe's words are eaten' in particular.

6. An example of similar mentor/focal figure relationship can be found in Boudjedra and Kane. In La Répudiation there are two pairs: Rachid confides in the French 'coopérante' Céline who is the mother figure as well as the untypical lover. There is also another pair, Rachid/Le Devin, whose relationship is based on shared political views as concerns the nature of the revolution. In Le Démantèlement it is between Selma and the narrator Tahar El Ghomri. However, if their relationship is based on mutual trust, it is not the case with the pair of Topographie; the 'laskars', who are supposed to help Said do not advise him. They rather mislead him by giving him unlikely accounts of their stay overseas.
Another pair is also to be found in L'Aventure Ambiguë with Thierno who acts as the adviser to the people of the Diallobé, and their Chief, but it is complemented by the specific relationship that exists between Samba Diallo and the madman with the former asking the latter for advice.

7. **Lascar**, spelled *laskar* by Rachid Boudjedra, who indicates that it is a word which comes from Arabic, meaning soldier, may be a confusing word since it has different undertones in English and French. In French it conveys the idea of a clever, lazy and dishonest fellow, sometimes engaged in illegal dealings.

8. **Desert**. In her "The desert in Algerian fiction," Mildred Mortimer refers to the occurence of similar examples of desert-related imagery in Algerian fiction. One of her examples is Malek Haddad's Je t'offrirai une gazelle (Paris: Julliard, 1959). Referring to a period spent in Paris, the novelist makes a description that plays upon the word desert, for Paris is as silent and as solitary for the exiled novelist as is the vast Sahara. The novelist views the Luxembourg gardens in winter as an "oasis taciturne", the frozen garden reinforcing his sense of isolation. See Mildred Mortimer, "The desert in Algerian fiction".

9. Compare this passage in Les Boucs with the following one in L'Aventure

Ambiguë: "Dans la cité naissante, telle doit être notre œuvre, à nous tous, Hindous, Chinois, Sud-Américains, Nègres, Arabes; nous tous dégigandés et lamentables, nous les sous-développés, qui nous sentons gauches en un monde de parfait ajustement mécanique"(Kane,93) ["In the city which is being born such should be our work - all of us, Hindus, Chinese, South Americans, Negroes, Arabs, all of us, awkward and pitiful, we the underdeveloped, who feel ourselves to be clumsy in a world of perfect mechanical adjustment."(Woods, 80)]

10. For the purposes of comparison, see Kofi Awoonor's This Earth, My Brother... and one of the veterans, Dzesan, who, like the main character Abotsi, is a Burma veteran: "He put himself in uniform, made one for his five year-old son, and marched with the infant from dawn till noon every market day on the main road singing 'Kayiwawa beturi', the theme song of his Burmese days. He screamed orders at his platoon- i.e. his five year-old son- who responded in little jerks, sweat streaming down his comely little face. His Father's eyes would be red as he screamed" (This Earth, 77-8).

11. When the narrator took up his job in the department of Education in Khartoum, that is two years after the death of Mustafa Sa'eed, he still continues to "meet up with him from time to time... Thus Mustafa Sa'eed has, against my will, become part of my world, a thought in my brain, a phantom that does not want to take itself off"(50)
In another passage the narrator again says that "In Khartoum too, the phantom of Mustafa Sa'eed appeared to me less than a month after my conversation with the retired Mamur, like a genie who has been released from his prison and will continue therefore to whisper in men's ears"(55)

Notes to part four

1. In his Les Isefra de Si-Mohand, the late Mouloud Mammeri notes that in days following the 1871 French domination of the Kabylie area in Algeria, "les émigrés quittaient le village de nuit, l'exode apparaissant comme une véritable désertion." (Mammeri, 1987, 24)

2. For further detail on this issue, see Mildred A. Hill-Lubin (1982), The Relationship of African-Americans and Africans: A Recurring Theme in the Works of Ata Aidoo, Présence Africaine, 124, 190-201.

3. For further reference, see C.D. Narasimhaiah (1974), Indian writing in English: an area of promise, Journal of Commonwealth Literature, 9/1, 33-49; and S. Nagarajan (1972), A note on myth and ritual in The Serpent and the Rope, Journal of Commonwealth Literature, 7/1, 45-8.

4. see Anthony Boxill (1971), A bibliography of West Indian fiction, 1900-1970, World Literature written in English, 19, 23-44.

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